

nancial challenges. Truty said the mill levy committee's philosophy was to identify what the district needed to sustain service to the community today and plan for both growth and changing demographics.

After a detailed presentation by Paul A. Hanley, senior vice president of George K. Baum & Co. (GKB), the directors voted unanimously to accept a letter of engagement with GKB to provide public policy guidance on the November election.

Truty said the entire election budget for 2017 is \$65,000, and the contract with GKB is for \$35,000. Hanley will guide the district through the mill levy process, interact with the community, involve taxpayers to build public support, and calculate the mill levy amount to put on the ballot.

Hanley said the first order of business would be for citizens to create an action committee to generate feedback from a wide range of residents. The action committee would also run the final phase of the campaign including advertising, since the fire district would not be allowed to do that type of advocacy.

Truty said he has already begun searching for residents willing to serve on the action committee to figure out what level of service they are willing to pay for. Hanley recommended speaking with business, civic, and senior citizen community leaders; major property taxpayers; the healthcare community; homeowners association representatives; and "movers and shakers." However, no elected officials should be on the committee.

Truty asked that all interested action committee members should contact the district as soon as possible.

#### Wescott update

Truty said he met with DWFPD Chief Vinny Burns the week before this meeting, and Truty communicated the TLMFPD board's position regarding Wescott's request that TLMFPD pay fees for certain situations when DWFPD assists with calls in Tri-Lakes' area, since there was a

noticeable disparity between the two districts. See [www.ocn.me/v17n2.htm#tlmfpd/](http://www.ocn.me/v17n2.htm#tlmfpd/).

Truty said Burns was "open to working with us," perhaps removing the fee if TLMFPD could reduce the disparity in the number of automatic aid calls DWFPD responded to in TLMFPD.

Truty said the CAD system for dispatching is not as customizable as he would like. This generated a technical discussion about the best way to get Wescott's help on just the most serious calls, such as cardiac or respiratory arrests, in TLMFPD's southern area.

The consensus of the board was that this could be worked out, but they were still concerned about whether Wescott would have a unit with a paramedic, and not just an EMT, for those life-threatening calls. Secretary Mike Smaldino asked if Truty and Burns had discussed Wescott's daily staffing issues (in light of Wescott's freeze on almost all overtime pay), but Truty said they didn't discuss this. See [www.ocn.me/v16n12.htm#dwfpd1115](http://www.ocn.me/v16n12.htm#dwfpd1115).

"Sounds like they are willing keep discussing this," Smaldino said to Truty. "So thank Wescott for hanging with us while we figure out our side."

#### Chief's report

Truty's report included:

- Firefighter Nate Snyder applied for a grant from the Firefighters Charitable Foundation, and he earned \$300 for the district. The award might be used for public fire education materials.
- The county wants to standardize the impact fee approval process for fire districts, so a committee is being formed to develop a plan to bring to the commissioners.
- He is concerned how the 1982 Gallagher Amendment could negatively affect the district budget in 2018.

The mention of the Gallagher Amendment generated a discussion about possible new fees the district could

charge to offset that loss, since the amount of revenue from property taxes will also be reduced next year.

Deputy Chief Randy Trost said that the two new senior living centers coming to Monument soon will affect the district's call volume, and TLMFPD needed to evaluate various situations, such as if an ambulance responds to assist someone but does not transport them, should a different kind of fee be assessed. Office Administrator Jennifer Martin said that billing is different for residents of assisted living facilities than for those in skilled care facilities. The consensus of the board was to direct Truty to present them with some fee options they could consider.

**Note:** The district's fee schedule was last updated in November. See [www.ocn.me/v16n12.htm#tlmfpd1115](http://www.ocn.me/v16n12.htm#tlmfpd1115).

Trost's comments included:

- TLMFPD's new hires are at firefighter academy in west metro Denver, and one of them was interviewed by a Denver news station. Their first live burn exercise was scheduled for Feb. 23.
- TLMFPD's Kevin Richmond is one of the instructors at the academy.
- Trost commended Battalion Chief Mike Keough, Lt. Micah Coyle, and Engineer Jody Thorpe for creating the first-ever engineer promotion process, developing a written test, practical exam, and evaluation of candidates.

The meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

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Meetings are usually held the fourth Wednesday of each month. The next meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 22 at TLMFPD Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. For information, contact Jennifer Martin at 719-484-0911 or see [www.tlmfire.org](http://www.tlmfire.org).

Lisa Hatfield can be reached at [lisahatfield@ocn.me](mailto:lisahatfield@ocn.me).

### El Paso Board of County Commissioners, Jan. 31 and Feb. 9, 14, and 21

## Commissioners address watershed protection measures; Cherry Creek Crossing PUD amendment

By Helen Walklett

The El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) considered several issues related to the Tri-Lakes area recently, including two projects to carry out emergency watershed protection measures and a request for approval of a Planned Unit Development (PUD) amendment within the Cherry Creek Crossing development. The BOCC also approved the 2017 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Black Forest Slash and Mulch Committee (SAMCOM).

#### Emergency watershed protection measures

The BOCC unanimously approved forms related to pending grant agreements with the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). These relate to emergency watershed protection measures for two major projects, one concerning Gleneagle Homeowners Association properties on Gleneagle Drive and the other involving the Puskas property on Monument Lake Road.

Both areas had sustained major damage due to substantial rain and flooding in May and June of 2015, which was a Presidentially Declared Disaster. The NRCS conducted damage survey reports that resulted in funding being made available to the county to install emergency watershed protection measures. The county Department of Public Works identified required work including pond outlet repair and sediment and debris removal in the Gleneagle Homeowners Association area. The work at the Puskas property will involve removing debris and re-establishing pre-flood hydraulic capacity to reduce flood hazards.

#### Cherry Creek Crossing PUD amendment

A quasi-judicial matter seeking approval of a request for an amended PUD development plan within the Cherry Creek Crossing development came before the BOCC and received unanimous approval. This area is at the

northwest corner of Highway 83 and Hodgen Road.

The amended plan specifically identifies allowed land uses and adds specific less-intensive uses associated with a greenhouse for the 8.5-acre commercial parcel of land within the development. Specific land uses had not been identified previously.

The proposed uses associated with a greenhouse include the sale of greenhouse products, a farmer's market, a restaurant serving food produced in the greenhouse, living quarters for employees, and a classroom space where food cultivation and preparation could be taught.

The Cherry Creek Crossing development also contains 110 single-family lots. The Planning and Community Development Department notified 10 adjoining property owners of the application coming before the BOCC. One written objection was received from Eli and Lacy Miranda, whose property is located directly across from the PUD, stating that they did not know this property was zoned PUD and that they probably would not have purchased the land had they known.

#### Black Forest slash and mulch program

SAMCOM Director Jeff DeWitt gave an end-of-season report to the BOCC meeting on Feb. 9 ahead of the commissioners voting unanimously to approve the 2017 MOU with SAMCOM.

This wildfire mitigation and recycling program began in 1994 and accepts slash (tree debris including branches, leaves, needles, etc.) from local residents and grinds the slash into mulch that is available free of charge.

Kathy Andrew, Environmental Division manager, Community Services Department, explained that, under the MOU, the county contributes \$35,000 toward grinding costs and some staff time. She described the program as truly the best of recycling and said it "represents the best of El Paso County."

The Black Forest Slash and Mulch site's Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, April 22 at 9 a.m. in The Black Forest Community Hall. The site reopens for slash drop-off on Saturday, April 29 through Sept. 10. There is a \$2 drop-off fee for slash; a loyalty card allows drop-off of 12 loads for \$20, and credit for a load of slash is given when a load of mulch is taken. Free mulch will be available for self-loading from May 13 through Sept. 23. For large quantities of mulch, an end loader is available only on Saturdays, 7 a.m.-4 p.m., charging \$5 for two cubic yards. Normal business hours are Saturdays 7 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sundays, noon-4 p.m.; Tuesday and Thursday evenings, 5-7:30 p.m. For more information visit [bf-slash.org](http://bf-slash.org) or call Carolyn, 495-3127, Chuck, 495-8675, Jeff, 495-8024, or the county Environmental Division, 520-7878.

#### More decisions

Other items unanimously approved by the commissioners:

- Jan. 31—acceptance of a Special Warranty Deed from the Brookmoor Homeowner's Association regarding the purchase of a portion of Tract A, Brookmoor Filing No. 3, for \$91,500.
- Jan. 31—an application for Preliminary Acceptance of Lindenmere Drive within the Misty Acres development into the El Paso County road maintenance system following completion and inspection of the public improvements in this subdivision.
- Feb. 21—the final release of letter of credit for public improvements of the Tri-Lakes Church of Christ site development plan for \$4,564 following completion and inspection of all of the public improvements in this subdivision.

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### Tri-Lakes Senior Center Identity Theft Seminar, Feb. 10

## Protect yourself from nefarious identity thieves

By Helen Walklett

"Be the hardest target you can!" was the message from Cary Johnson, the speaker at the identity theft seminar held Feb. 10 at the Tri-Lakes Senior Center on the Lewis-

Palmer High School campus. Johnson, of the 1st Judicial District Attorney's Office, explained that identity theft is an escalating crime but that there are several practical steps you can take to protect your wealth and identity.

Johnson explained that 5 percent of Americans are victims of identity theft every year. That equates to 10 million victims annually, and it is a crime that is on the increase with 14 million reported cases last year. Over