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Issue #277 — Volume 24 Number 4 — Saturday, April 6, 2024

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Local Events

Readers should assume that event information published in this issue is subject to change and information should be confirmed a day or two before the event by calling the information number or checking the organization's website.

- See pages 22-23 for event locations and other details of these and many other local events.
- OCN mailing days, Thu., Apr. 4 & May 2, approx. 7-8:30 am.
 - Monument Library Chess Club, Sat., Apr. 6 & 20, 2-4 pm.
 - Friends of Monument Preserve Trail Repair Work Day, Tue., Apr. 9, 5 pm.
 - Susan Helmich in store event for buying estate jewelry, Thu.-Fri., Apr. 11-12. By appointment. See ad on page 10.
 - 100+ women who care membership/social networking, Wed. Apr. 17, 5 pm
 - Boy Scout Troop 17 Spaghetti Dinner, Sat., Apr. 13, 5:30-7:30 pm.
 - Palmer Lake Historical Society, Thu., Apr. 18, 7 pm.
 - Earth Day Event-Friends of Fox Run Park, Sat., Apr. 20, 10-2
 - YMCA healthy kids day, Sat., Apr. 20. See ad on page 6.
 - Friends of Fox Run Park, Zoom meeting, Thu., Apr. 25, 7 pm
 - Arbor Day presentation, Fri., Apr. 26, 10 am.
 - Wildfire Risk Reduction Day, Sat., Apr. 27. PRHS auditorium.
 - NEPCO meeting, Sat., May 11, 10 am-noon.
 - Little Log Church 100th Anniversary Celebration, Sat., May 11, 1-4 pm. See ad on page 2.
 - Taste of Tri-Lakes Cares, Wed., May 15, 5:30-8:30 pm. See ad on page 4.
 - Silver Key Senior Summit-Expo of Senior Services, Thu., May 16, 9-2 pm. See ad on page 8.
 - A Time to Dance, The Way Home, Fri., May 17. See ad on page 4.
 - YMCA summer day camp ages 5-12 begins May 28. See ad on page 6.
 - Kiwanis Monument Hill Foundation grant applications due May 30. See ad on page 10.
 - Space Foundation kids' summer fun weeks, June 10-14, or June 15-19. See ad on page 12.
 - Front Range Maker's Market Shop, Sat. June 22, 9-4, Sun., June 23, 10-3. See ad on page 5.

Mount Herman "Leap"



Above: This group accompanied Randy Phillips on his quest to complete his "grid", summiting Mount Herman on every calendar day. For details, please see the *On the Trail* column on page 20. Photo by Randy Phillips

Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education, Feb. 26, March 5, 18 & 20

New hires in leadership positions; superintendent search and farewell

By Harriet Halbig

The February meeting of the Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education was held late in the month, making it impossible to include in the March issue of OCN.

At that meeting, Commander Antonio Cruz of Disabled American Veterans Chapter 26 presented a plaque to the district thanking them for a \$1,500 donation resulting from a Jeans for Veterans Day in November where staff could wear jeans to work if they made a donation.

New hires

The board approved the hiring of four individuals in leadership positions:

- Kim Briding as Palmer Lake Elementary School principal.
- Rachel Sellers as Prairie Winds Elementary School principal.
- Melissa Andrews as director of Planning, Facilities, and Grounds.
- Danielle Holmes as director of Special Education.

Position of acting superintendent approved

Current superintendent K.C. Somers was scheduled to leave the area on

March 31. Assistant Superintendent Amber Whetstine was approved to fill the position of acting superintendent until June 30.

New curriculum approved

The board approved the following new curriculum following public review

- National Geographic World Cultures and Geography Eastern Hemisphere for grade 7.
 - National Geographic U.S. History American Stories beginnings to 1877 for grade 8.
 - Houghton Mifflin Science Dimensions Biology for grades 9-12.
- Whetstine explained that the district reviews curriculum on a six-year cycle.

Stakeholder survey

Board President Tiffney Upchurch reported that a stakeholder survey resulted in over 1,000 responses as part of the superintendent search. Stakeholders include members of the community, employees, parents, and students.

Superintendent search

The superintendent search was a

D38 BOE (Cont. on 6)

El Paso County Planning Commission, March 7 and 21

Highway 83 access plan approved

By Helen Walklett

At the March 7 El Paso County Planning Commission meeting, the commissioners voted unanimously to approve the Highway 83 Access Control Plan (ACP) and incorporate it into the county's master plan. The commissioners also heard three land development requests for the Tri-Lakes area during March.

Highway 83 access plan

The ACP covers the stretch of Highway 83 from its junction with Powers Boulevard to County Line Road, a length of almost 10 miles. It is a long-range plan for 2045 and beyond aimed at improving safety and mobility. The county's Department of Public Works, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the City of Colorado Springs worked together to develop the plan. CDOT led the work because it owns and maintains the corridor.

The Planning Commission previously received a presentation of the proposed plan at its Dec. 7 meeting. See www.ocn.me/v24n1.htm#wpcpc.

Arthur Gonzalez of CDOT told the commissioners that the only change since the December presentation had been the inclusion of an access based on an agreement between CDOT and an individual which had been omitted from the initial proposed plan. There are around 70 individual access points along this part of Highway 83 and most allow full movement, meaning there are no turn restrictions.

Future traffic volumes along this portion of the highway are expected to increase in the range of 17% to 86% by 2045. Without changes, this increase is expected to result in increased delays, congestion, pollution, and crashes. The plan is also intended to be a tool to help the county, the city, and CDOT make access decisions during development and redevelopment, and will streamline the access permitting process.

It was again stressed that the

EPCPC (Cont. on 2)

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Above: The March 18 D38 Board of Education meeting marked the last board meeting for outgoing Superintendent KC Somers, whose last day with the district was March 31. Somers, who started in July 2019, had a tenure of nearly five years. Leadership team members from administration, principals, and board members spoke about Somers' impact and support. Executive Director of Exceptional Student Services Rick Frampton highlighted Somers' leadership during the pandemic, and board member Ron Schwarz listed some of Somers' signature accomplishments. Somers gave a nod to everyone in the audience and all in the community and district. He emphasized the importance of relationships, noting the South African term "sawubona" which translates to "we see you" and saying it had been a privilege and an honor to serve. From left, board President Tiffney Upchurch, board members Ron Schwarz and Todd Brown, Somers, and board members Patti Shank and Kris Norris. Photo by Jackie Burhans.

EPCPC (Cont. from 1)

plan itself does not identify specific projects. Changes would only come if a problem with traffic flow or safety came to light, properties were developed or redeveloped along the cor-

ridor, or state or federal funding for a roadway project comes forward (none has been identified at present). The plan was developed with public input, and Gonzalez said it addresses concerns raised by stakehold-

ers. These include speeding, noise and number of large trucks, traffic volume overall, lack of turn lanes, safety around the newly constructed Stagecoach Road intersection, sight distance through curves, and a need for more traffic signals.

Speaking specifically to the new Stagecoach Road intersection, Jason Nelson of CDOT said he attended a meeting with some 200 residents facilitated by the HOA on the west side of the highway. The developer of Flying Horse North had made improvements on the east side, but it was clear that further improvements to the junction are needed. He said a task force with a consultant on board has been established and CDOT is looking for a location for a public open house. He said, "We have no funding to construct anything but at least we are back engaging and seeing what we can do."

Following the commission's approval, the intergovernmental agreement among the three partners will now go to the El Paso Board of County

Commissioners (BOCC) for signing.

Proposed Black Forest subdivision

Also at the March 7 meeting, the commissioners heard a request by the Jon Didleaux and Phyllis Didleau Revocable Trust for approval of a 32.168-acre minor subdivision to create four single-family lots and two tracts. The property is zoned RR-5 (residential rural) and is located at 8250 Forest Heights Circle east of Herring Road and north of Shoup Road. The proposed subdivision would be known as Forest Heights Estates.

In conformity with the zoning, all four proposed lots will be a minimum of 5 acres. Two are proposed to be larger at 7.6 acres and 12.10 acres and these would be located on the property's south side near neighboring larger properties. The two smaller lots would be located adjacent to smaller lots to the property's north and west.

Access to the lots is proposed to be via the existing private gravel road,

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Forest Heights Circle, which extends east from Herring Road and serves six existing family homes. The applicant's letter of intent states that improvements would be made to this to enhance its accessibility.

The request was scheduled to be heard as a consent item but was elevated to a full hearing due to public interest. Four citizens spoke in opposition focusing on trail access, dedication of land for trail easements, the requested waivers pertaining to allowing a private rather than public road and not establishing an HOA, and the maintenance agreement for the private road. The commissioners stated that they felt the concerns were either not directly relevant to the review criteria or were not legally enforceable.

Speaking during the

public comment section, Larry Fariss, a neighbor and previous long-term chair of the Black Forest Trails Association, described the property as a linchpin for the area's trail system.

Chair Thomas Bailey commented, "There's nothing that compels a property owner to grant an easement." Dave Gorman, with M.V.E. Inc. and representing the applicant, said the family was not comfortable with having a public trail on their mother's property.

The vote to recommend for approval was unanimous

and the application was then heard at the BOCC land use meeting on March 28. See BOCC article on page 4.

Gleneagle minor subdivision

The commissioners voted unanimously on March 7 to recommend for approval a request by Aaron Atwood for a 5.04-acre minor subdivision to be known as Pair-A-Dise to create two single-family lots. The property is zoned RR-2.5 and is located on Struthers Loop, south of the junction of West Baptist Road and Leather Chaps Road. The site is currently

vacant. The proposed lots would each slightly exceed 2.5 acres.

The application was heard as a consent item, meaning there was no discussion. It was then considered at the BOCC land use meeting on March 28. See BOCC article on page 4.

Vessey Road rezone

At their March 21 meeting, the commissioners voted to recommend for approval an application by Pawel Posorski for a rezoning of 6.02 acres from RR-5 (rural residential) to RR-2.5 (rural residential). The property is located at 6225 Vessey Road,

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a half-mile east of the intersection of Vessey Road and Neva Lane. A final plat application has also been submitted to create two lots from the parcel. This is under review and has not yet been scheduled for a public hearing.

The application was heard as a consent item. Commissioner Christopher Whitney asked why the county's report to the commission stated that the property was surrounded by "smaller lots, some 2.5 acres in size" when one of the included maps showed RR-5 zoning around it. Ashlyn Mathy, planner II, Planning and Community Development Department, explained that some lots were created before zoning was put in place and therefore do not meet the lot size set by the zoning. She added that there is RR-2.5 zoning east and west of

the property. Bailey said, "I think this is an issue we see often, especially in this area. A lot of legal non-conforming lots. Perfectly legitimate but the zoning is different." Whitney said, "I can't say I'm happy, but I understand the answer."

The vote to recommend the application for approval was 8-1. Whitney was the nay vote. He said, "The zoning should mean something, otherwise why put a number on it? Just call it large-lot residential and whatever it is, it is." Offering an alternative view, Bailey asked, "I wonder though if the decision to zone this area RR-5 back when it was done, despite the fact that there were several 2.5-acre lots in that area, whether that was the right decision or not?"

It is now scheduled to be heard at the BOCC

land use meeting on April 11.

The El Paso County Planning Commission normally meets the first and (as required) the third Thursday of each month at the Regional Development Center, 2880 International Circle, Colo. Springs. Meetings are live-streamed on the El Paso County News and Information Channel at <https://www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel>. Information is available at 719-520-6300 and <https://planningdevelopment.elpasoco.com/planning-community-development/2024-hearings-schedule/>.

Helen Walklett can be reached at helenwalklett@ocn.me.

El Paso County Board of County Commissioners, March 28

Minor subdivisions in Black Forest and Gleneagle approved

By Helen Walklett

In March, the El Paso County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) considered minor subdivision requests for properties in Black Forest and Gleneagle.

Forest Heights Estates

At their March 28 land use meeting, the commissioners heard a request by the Jon Diddleaux and Phyllis Diddleau Revocable Trust for approval of a 32.168-acre minor subdivision to create four single-family lots and two tracts. The property is zoned RR-5 (residential rural) and is located at 8250 Forest Heights Circle east of Herring Road and north of Shoup Road. The subdivision will be known as Forest Heights Estates.

The application came to the BOCC with a unanimous recommendation for approval from the March 7 El Paso County Planning Commission meeting. At that meeting, four citizens spoke in opposition, focusing on trail access, dedication of land for trail easements, the requested waivers (pertaining to allowing a private rather than public road and not establishing an HOA), and the maintenance agreement for the private road. The com-

missioners at that meeting felt the concerns were either not directly relevant to the review criteria or were not legally enforceable.

In conformity with the zoning, all four proposed lots will be a minimum of 5 acres. Two are proposed to be larger at 7.6 acres and 12.10 acres and these will be located on the property's south side near neighboring larger properties. The two smaller lots will be located adjacent to smaller lots to the property's north and west. Access to the lots is proposed via the existing private gravel road, Forest Heights Circle, which extends east from Herring Road and serves six existing family homes. The applicant will be responsible for improving the road and the cul-de-sac at its end. The maintenance of the road will be undertaken by the residents under a formal agreement, although the commissioners heard that not all the neighbors have signed this.

At the BOCC meeting, Ryan Howser, planner III, Planning and Community Development, said that since the Planning Commission hearing the applicant has proposed to work with the community to provide the requested trail easements. This would include a northern easement for a trail along

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the northern edge of lot 1, which would enable a connection to Meadow Glen Lane. The gesture was described by Commissioner Carrie Geitner as "quite generous."

Judy von Ahlefeldt, an adjacent neighbor, spoke in opposition during the public comment section of the hearing to suggest an alternative to the planned cul-de-sac. This would see it built in a different location which she said would provide better protection for the wetlands. She described it as a practical, economic, conservation solution and said, "I am offering to purchase the end of Forest Heights Circle and have two shared private driveways. I will pay for survey costs. I will pay for maintaining this end of the road."

In rebuttal Dave Gorman, with M.V.E. Inc. and representing the applicant, said the proposed roadway was designed to closely meet county standards and the cul-de-sac is required in the standards and was intended to promote safety. Applicant Jon Ditleaux said, "Judy suggested that we move that cul-de-sac but that takes up two areas. It cuts into both 5-acre parcels that we're trying to subdivide, and we were trying to avoid that just to make it a regular 5-acre parcel for the future owner without having to put a cul-de-sac in each person's lot."

Seeking clarification, Commissioner Stan VanderWerf said, "There were some statements made by Ms. von Ahlefeldt today offering an alternate proposal and offering to help fund that alternate proposal. Has there been a formal offer from her to your clients about that and, if so, has that been rejected by your clients?" The answer from Gorman was no. VanderWerf then continued, "Under the conditions that this might go forward and be voted on and approved, I just was interested in knowing, I would presume those discussions could continue should an offer be made and the applicant consider it?" Staff advised that this would be the case and it would be a matter for Ms. von Ahlefeldt and the applicant to work out between themselves.

The vote to approve was unanimous.


Gleneagle minor subdivision

Also at the March 28 land use meeting, the commissioners voted unanimously to approve a request by Aaron Atwood for a 5.04-acre minor subdivision to be known as Pair-A-Dise to create two single-family lots. The property is zoned RR-2.5 and is located on Struthers Loop, south of the junction of West Baptist Road and Leather Chaps Road. The site is currently vacant. The proposed lots will each slightly exceed 2.5 acres. The application was heard as a consent item, meaning there was no discussion.

The El Paso County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) usually meets every Tuesday at 9 am at Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade Ave., Suite 150, Colo. Springs. Agendas and meetings can be viewed at www.agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso. Information is available at 719-520-643. BOCC land use meetings are normally held the second and fourth Thursdays of the month (as needed) at 1 pm in Centennial Hall.

Helen Walklett can be reached at helenwalklett@ocn.me

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D38 BOE (Cont. from 1)

major subject of conversation at the March 5 work session and the March 18 regular meeting of the board.

To view details of the process, please go to the district website, lewispalmer.org, and superintendent search 2024. There you can view several videos of presentations by Dr. Walt Cooper of McPherson-Jacobson, the firm conducting the search.

In brief, there was first a survey sent to stakeholders in the district asking about individual priorities to take into account while selecting a new superintendent. These would include community involvement, conservatism and traditional values, academic excellence, safety of students, financial responsibility, and quality and dedication of teachers. To view the ratings in detail, please see boarddocs.

The top three critical issues expressed by the stakeholders were staff recruitment and retention, teacher quality, and financial management.

At the March 18 regular meeting, Cooper reported that a committee of stakeholders had been formed to compile a list of questions for candidates based on the findings from the survey. He also asked each board member to submit three or four questions.

In explaining the terms of McPherson-Jacobson's contract, Cooper said that its participation includes not only the search for a new superintendent

but assistance during the transition process and a two-year guarantee. If the selected candidate does not remain for two years, a new search will be conducted without charge. Additional assistance in the transition would be provided by the Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB) and the Colorado Association of School Executives (CASE). These two associations had previously administered searches in the state.

Board Treasurer Ron Schwarz commented that the selection process is subjective. It is critical to find a candidate with the right fit for the community.

Cooper agreed that it is important to consider a good fit and not just the presence of the appropriate skill set. He offered a rubric to help the board organize its thoughts while considering candidates. He added that each candidate would be provided with a question that they would answer in the form of a three-minute video. These videos would become part of the file for each candidate.

He stressed that many candidates will probably research the district and its priorities. As part of the announcement of the vacancy, there was an explanation of the district's strategic plan and its role in organizing the district's activities. The video question would be something that could not be researched, such as why a candidate views himself or herself as the best fit for the position.

Cooper recommended that there will be two days of interviews. The first, on the evening of April 4, would consist of a public forum at which each candidate would be asked a few questions and attendees could respond in person or online as the event would be livestreamed. This interview would be held in a round-robin format. Candidates will not get the questions ahead of time. The second, on April 5, would be interviews in executive session. On April 6 the board would meet to decide on a finalist and begin contract negotiations. The finalist would be confirmed at the board's regular meeting on April 15.

Board goals and assignments

As part of the work session, the board went into a detailed discussion of what actions they would like to take based on the district's strategic plan.

Two board members were assigned to address each category.

To view the proposed actions and assignments, please see boarddocs.

Financial planning

Another ongoing discussion involves preliminary planning for the 2024-25 district budget.

Chief Business Officer Brett Ridgway reported that his development of the budget pivots on the assumption of a 6% increase in funding from the state School Finance Act. Funding has not yet been finalized but is expected sometime in April.

Regarding compensation, Ridgway has developed a budget which would offer an average salary increase of 5.85% with a larger percentage going to lower-paid individuals and a smaller percentage going to higher-paid individuals. This budget includes only the traditional schools, with an appropriate amount set aside for the use of Monument Academy. This also does not include funding from such sources as the Transportation Fund and the Nutritional Services Fund.

Ridgway also proposed setting aside \$3 million for capital maintenance funding in the coming year. He said that a new inventory of facilities will soon be underway. A 10% contingency fund is built into this line item in case of unexpected expenses, such as with the Lewis-Palmer Elementary School corridor project, he said.

When asked whether BEST (Building Excellent Schools Today) grant money would be available for any of the proposed projects, Ridgway responded that funding for that program is decreasing.

The next step is to discuss the proposed budget with the Staff Collaboration Committee and the Financial Transparency Committee.

Ridgway also announced that the state Senate bill which he has written, Senate Bill 24-017, has passed unanimously in the Senate and the House Education Committee. This bill will change the timing of payments from the state. At present the district must hold \$15 million in cash during January and February to cover district expenses until property tax payments begin in March. It would shift the timing away from March-June to earlier in the year. This would free up \$8 million to benefit



Above: Julie Race is a Strategies for Teaching based on Autism Research (STAR) teacher at Prairie Winds Elementary School. Race is this year's winner of the Fox21 Remarkable Woman of Southern Colorado for 2024. Seven individuals nominated Race for this prestigious honor, recognizing her profound impact on children's lives. Race thanked her principal and the district, saying she loves the families and appreciates the paraprofessionals who help. From left are board President Tiffney Upchurch, Superintendent KC Somers, Race, and Exceptional Student Services Executive Director Rick Frampton. Photo by Jackie Burhans.



Above: At the March 18 D38 Board of Education meeting, the board celebrated Music in Our Schools Month. Members recognized that musical arts are vital to the well-being of students at every level, providing a positive impact on academic, personal, and professional growth. They also noted that Lewis-Palmer School District 38 music instructors work diligently to ensure a comprehensive program from kindergarten through graduation. Lee Meyer (Lewis-Palmer Middle School vocal music teacher) and Nathan Nors (Prairie Winds Elementary School general music teacher) also spoke briefly about D38 music programming. From left are Meyer, Nors, board President Tiffney Upchurch, Monument Academy Strings Teacher Christin Patterson, and Superintendent KC Somers. Photo by Jackie Burhans.



Above: Assistant Superintendent Amber Whetstine introduced Courtney Harrell to the school board for its consideration and approval. Harrell has over 18 years of experience in education from science teacher to assistant principal championing support for students and creating a welcoming environment for staff and families. Harrell said she was eager to lead LPMS with wisdom and strength. Whetstine said Harrell was so excited to start that she showed up on the 18th to unofficially meet the staff. Harrell spoke briefly, saying it was an honor to meet everyone. The board unanimously approved the appointment of Harrell. From left are board President Tiffney Upchurch, Harrell, and Whetstine. Photo by Jackie Burhans.

the students during January and February. Schwarz commented that bipartisan support at this level is very unusual and the bill may become law before the end of the month. The board will announce when it becomes law.

Chess Tournament

Steve Waldman spoke of the 17th annual Chess Tournament held Feb. 4 at Bear Creek Elementary School. This year there were a record number of participants, 127 students from grades K through 12. This is the first- or second-largest tournament in the state.

Waldman thanked Bear Creek Principal Donnell Potter, school custodians, Key Club and National Honor Society students, reading teacher Cindy Waldman, and others for their help in setting up and refereeing the tournament.

The tournament was divided into three groups: grades K-6, grades 7-8, and grades 9-12. The first three places received trophies. Several winners were present at the meeting. To see a list of participants, please see boarddocs under the Board of Education tab at the district website, lewispalmer.org. Select the date of the meeting.

Student representatives

The board now welcomes two student representatives at each of its meetings. These students are welcome to participate in discussions and present information about their schools. They do not re-

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ceive a vote as they were not elected to the board.

The students at the March 18 meeting were Maren and Aaron from Lewis-Palmer High School. To view their presentation, please see board-docs.

New Middle School principal
The board approved the hiring of Courtney Harrell as principal of Lewis-Palmer Middle School.

Superintendent farewell
The board and several individuals expressed their gratitude for Somers' contributions to the district during his tenure.

His ability to guide the district through the pandemic while maintaining school performance was recognized. He went to Washington, D.C., to explain how the district was able to maintain student participation hours and was interviewed by The Washington Post. He implement-

ed a campaign to improve literacy at a time when many districts were declining. He demonstrated an ability to listen deeply to those he encountered, notably during his listening tour at the beginning of his tenure.

Several members of the administration, teachers, and community members thanked him for his leadership and contributions to the district.

Somers responded that he felt the key to his success had been through relationships within the district and the community. He said it had been an honor to serve and that he will not be a stranger. To view the farewell, please see the livestream of the meeting on lewispalmer.org.

Finalists selected
At its special meeting on March 20, the board announced the selection of four finalists for superintendent. They are:
• Dr. Stacie Datteri, assistant

superintendent of Academic Achievement and School Leadership, District 6, Greeley.

- Michael Freeman, community superintendent of schools, Jefferson County.
- Alicia Welch, director of Human Resources, District 38.
- Amber Whetstine, assistant superintendent and acting superintendent, District 38.

To view the resumes of the candidates, please see the website under superintendent search 2024.

Correction

In last month's article about a meeting of the Parent and Community Advisory Committee, we said that Board President Tiffiney Upchurch traveled to Washington, D.C., as part of a coalition from the Colorado Association of School Boards Federal Relations Network. The purpose of the visit was to lobby for promised funding of the In-

dividuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), created in 1975.

At its inception, Congress pledged to fund education for individuals with Individualized Education Plans at the rate of 40%. This funding was never achieved. At present, the funding is at a rate of 13%. The district funds the remainder.

The article stated that the delegation achieved the full funding. This was not the case. Although some bipartisan support was achieved, there was also a degree of disinterest.

OCN regrets the error.

The Lewis-Palmer District 38 Board of Education meets at 6 p.m. on the third Monday of each month in the district Learning Center, 146 Jefferson St., Monument. The next regular meeting is on April 15.

Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me.

Monument Academy School Board, March 10, 14, and 21

Board selects executive director candidates

By Jackie Burhans

Monument Academy (MA) held two special meetings and one regular board meeting by Zoom in March. Both special meetings consisted primarily of executive sessions, the second of which yielded finalists for MA's open executive director position. The board also updated policies and heard administrative and committee reports.

Executive director finalists named

The MA board held a special meeting on Thursday, March 21 to go into executive session to interview and discuss candidates not yet named as finalists for the position of executive director. Before entering the executive session, it added another item "to discuss personnel matters re: an employee grievance and legal advice related to the grievance process."

The board returned after two hours and unanimously advanced the finalists for the executive director position: Joshua Yancy, Colin Vinchattle, and David Stanfield. Vinchattle is currently MA's middle school principal.

A special meeting will be held on April 4 at 6:30 p.m. in the East Campus Gym to hear from the finalists.

No action was announced regarding the grievance issue.

Policies updated

The MA board unanimously approved an update to its policy IKE-MA Promotion, Retention and Acceleration of Student. Interim Executive Director Kim McClelland said this came to her attention from a registrar and she noticed some red flags in the processes which required a replacement policy. She spoke of the need to use the school's Multi-Tiered Support System (MTSS) to ensure proper interventions and support. She noted that in the past, parents had wanted to hold students back so they could do a sport again. The policy addresses how to handle cases for students who have an educational support plan such as an IEP, 504 or ALP. It also requires that elementary students be administered the Light's Retention Scale before any final retention decision.

The board also unanimously approved the updated policy 1525 State Assessments Refusal Policy. The changes include updating the form and deadline information and by adding the requirement for counseling should a parent/guardian choose to excuse their student from testing

once it has begun.

Highlights

Board meeting highlights included:

- MA held a special board meeting on Sunday, March 10 to go into executive session for legal advice on specific legal matters related to personnel contracts, investigations, and processes and for negotiations and advice to negotiators regarding employment contracts and agreements; and for personnel matters related to the high school and central administration. The board reconvened after an hour and half, taking no action.
- The board went into executive session after its regular meeting on March 14 for negotiations and advice to negotiators regarding executive director interviews and contract discussions and to discuss specialized details of security arrangements or investigations. They returned after more than two hours, taking no further action.
- McClelland spoke with D38 interim Superintendent Amber Whetstine about adding language to its charter contract to confirm that MA can offer homeschool enrichment. The board unanimously approved the language proposed by its legal counsel.
- The board unanimously approved funding of \$99 for election software for the upcoming board election and asked the Governance Committee to amend the policy so that the authorization would be automatic for future elections.
- Financial consultant Glenn Gustafson reported that he was very optimistic that financial plans are coming together and that MA is poised to finish the year on target for its budget. His number one priority for the FY24-25 budget is to restore East Campus to financial viability.
- Gustafson said the School Finance Act was still in limbo but task force recommendations would result in a reduction in D38 funding, though that might get delayed until FY25-26. Board President Ryan Graham pointed out that could impact MA to the tune of \$700,000 and suggested the community reach out to representatives.
- Graham said that when school

starts in August, both circulation roads should be available.

- Board member Emily Belisle said the Curriculum Commit-

tee proposes pausing the implementation of the new math curriculum to discuss changes in the curriculum adoption policy.

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Board member Karen Hoida said the Governance Committee supports this proposal.

The MA School Board meets at 6:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month.

The board will hold a special meeting on Thursday, April 4 with the executive director finalists. The next

regular board meeting will be on Thursday, April 11, at 6:30 p.m. at the East Campus. See more information at see

<https://bit.ly/ma-boe>. Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

Monument Town Council, March 4 and 18

Council reviews redistricting, infrastructure, and parks

By Chris Jeub

The Monument Town Council covered various topics in March, including discussions on Monument redistricting, infrastructure development along Jackson Creek Parkway, and Higby Road's classification. The council approved a daytime park at Falcon Commerce Center and addressed water delivery costs and the ongoing debate between the Loop Renewable Water Project and the Northern Delivery System (NDS). Updates were provided on the building moratorium and an inquiry into raising traffic impact fees.

Monument redistricting
Discussions revolved around the presentation of findings and options regarding residential district boundaries by the council's District Advisory Commission. Points included the existence of two residential districts and the necessity to enact changes 180 days before the upcoming election, as outlined in Ordinance No. 25-2023. Emphasizing principles such as one-person-one-vote, racial equality, compactness, contiguity, and preservation of communities of interest, the commission examined census data revealing a population imbalance between District 1 and District 2 in Monument, prompting a proposed redistricting plan.

With District 1 currently housing 4,648 people (56%) and District 2 accommodating 5,891 people (44%), projections indicate a significant population increase to 14,100 by November 2024. The suggested redistricting adjustments aim to balance population distribution, with District 1 proposed at 7,236 and District 2 at 7,131, representing a remarkably close 0.7% difference. Town Attorney Bob Cole noted the rarity of achieving such proximity in redistricting projects.

Jackson Creek Parkway
Jeremiah Reichert from Public Works led a discussion on the construction timelines for Highway 105 and Jackson Creek Parkway. He explained the complex mix of stakeholders including Classic Homes, the Town of Monument, El Paso County, and the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). Reichert emphasized the necessity of infrastructure improvement along the corridor, highlighting the shared burden among the involved parties. Concerns were raised about future maintenance, particularly regarding the widening of Highway 105 encroaching into CDOT's right-of-way, prompting worries about the town's capacity to manage such responsibilities. Mayor Mitch LaKind pondered the

potential scenario of CDOT shifting maintenance costs to the town. Classic Homes contributed to the discussion by addressing the complexity of the project, including the presence of utilities in the area, and projected an additional eight months for the completion of the development.

Higby Road

Reichert also presented a Higby Road report. It was concluded from an engineering study that Higby qualifies as a major collector street, necessitating additional buildouts. However, discussions ensued regarding the width of Higby, with LaKind expressing concerns about its capacity given the numerous proposed developments in the area. Reichert clarified that the report focused on engineering aspects rather than development specifics, emphasizing comparisons with other thoroughfares like Baptist Road and Highway 105. Councilmember Steve King expressed concerns about potential hazards near the high school and the ongoing debate about right-of-way concessions. Despite differing opinions on challenging county decisions and the costs involved, it was acknowledged that Higby's classification as a major collector street had been confirmed. Plans were outlined

to further refine decisions regarding Higby Road's future by the end of 2024.

Daytime park approved

Ordinance No. 06-2024, concerning the approval of a final Planned Unit Development for Falcon Commerce Center Phase 2 Park, passed unanimously. Situated near South Baptist Road and I-25, staff confirmed that all criteria were met, with previous zoning and sketch plan approvals in 2022. The park, spanning 1.911 acres and intended for daytime use, aims to connect with the current Santa Fe Trail. Concerns were raised by Councilmember Kenneth Kimple regarding potential issues with traffic, lighting, and transient individuals utilizing the park for overnight stays. King, however, expressed support for the project, highlighting the value of allocating land for park use rather than industrial purposes, earning his endorsement with "two thumbs up."

Monument water

Earlier in the year, the council requested Public Utilities Director Thomas Tharnish to present on the cost of water delivery to Monument customers, a request made following council concerns between the Loop and the NDS. Key figures were discussed, including the cost of water delivery at \$10.49 per

1,000 gallons and the prevalence of three-fourths-inch-size meters supplying 90% of residential water services. Tharnish emphasized that there are additional costs to consider beyond the base delivery cost.

LaKind raised concerns about divergent cost figures between the Loop and NDS, prompting discussions about the longstanding debate between the two entities. Councilmembers expressed interest in resolving this issue and potentially aligning with one of the entities, with Councilmember Marco Fiorito highlighting the historical connection between NDS and the town. Councilmember Jim Romanello, however, urged the entire council to invite representatives from both the Loop and NDS for fair representation, a suggestion met with general agreement from all present.

After public comment, the discussion on water continued, with Kimple advocating for a timely decision due to upcoming decisions later. LaKind sought an update soon, with Town Manager Mike Foreman suggesting a meeting in the second half of May with representatives from the Loop, NDS, and Triview present. King expressed skepticism about the data provided by the Loop, while Councilmember Kronick emphasized the importance of making the right decision rather than feeling pressured.

Moratorium update

During public comment, concerns were raised regarding the building moratorium, with neighboring resident David Brewer expressing his desire for assistance from the Town Council in pursuing his American Dream of subdividing his 1,200-square-foot field. Brewer questioned the duration of the moratorium, as his request should necessitate only a short amount of the town's time. Foreman provided an update on the moratorium, stating that the town currently has under 20 active cases and has identified a candidate for the planning director position, with background checks underway. Foreman anticipated providing a further update in mid-April regarding when the moratorium might be lifted.

Traffic impact fees

Councilmember King highlighted the disparity between Monument's traffic impact fees, set at \$700 per dwelling unit, and those of other communities, which can reach several thousand dollars. King emphasized the principle that development should bear its own costs, particularly considering the current state of road infrastructure lagging the needs of Monument's residents. Foreman noted that the staff is assessing these fees and preparing a report to present to the council. LaKind expressed a desire to address this issue before the moratorium is lifted, indicating a sense of urgency in resolving the matter.

The Monument Council usually meets at 6:30 p.m. on the first and third Mondays of each month at Monument Town Hall, 645 Beacon Lite Road. The next meetings are



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meetings, see <http://monument-townco.minutesondemand.com> and click on Town Council.

Chris Jeub can be reached at chrisjeub@ocn.me.

Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, March 28

Restoration of Elephant Rock cabins proposed

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans
The Palmer Lake Board of Trustees (PLBOT) cancelled its March 4 meeting due to snow but convened on March 28 to hear a proposal from Lindsay and Richard Willan to restore six cabins and the long house at the Elephant Rock property. Town Attorney Scott Krob told the board that the application for annexation of the Ben Lomand property had been withdrawn. The board held a public hearing on a conditional use permit for a multi-family residential development in a C1 zone, followed by a vote on a resolution to grant the permit. It heard a request from Nikki McDonald to transfer a water tap from a property on Greeley Avenue to another property she owns. The board heard reports from Town Administrator Dawn Collins and Fire Chief John Vincent.

The March 28 meeting was preceded by an executive session.

Cabins could be asset to town, Willans claim

Lindsay and Richard Willan asked the board to reconsider its unanimous vote in 2023 to demolish six cabins and a larger structure called the “long house” at the Elephant Rock property. They proposed renovating the structures and using them as short-term residences for visitors to the spa they are planning to build at the property. They said the renovated cabins might also serve as office space, a yoga studio, an artist’s studio, or an art gallery.

The Willans showed the board a site map indicating the cabins and long house are outside the floodplain. They also presented a report from Darrell Yee, a consulting engineer, verifying the roof and walls of the structures were sound. The insurance policy the Willans have obtained for their spa can be expanded to include the cabins, they said. RE/MAX Properties was interested in providing long-term property management services.

The cabins and long house in their current state are worth \$735,000, the Willans said, but after renovation would be worth \$1.85 million. Under the Willans’ proposal, they would pay to renovate the structures, but the town would retain ownership. The Willans presented letters from Tri-Lakes Collaborative Counseling and from Smokebrush Foundation for the Arts indicating those organizations might finance some of the renovation work. Resident Cindy Powell said she was working on grants to finance the renovations and an “Adopt-a-Cabin” plan. Caryn Switey of the Wonders of Nature Forest School said the school was interested in providing funding if they could recoup their investment by receiving free use of a cabin until they had recovered their costs.

The Willans estimated their proposal would generate \$60,000 annual profit to the town. They projected a total benefit to the town of \$1.31 million when the increase in value after renovation is considered. Lindsay Willan estimated the renovation would take three years.

Following the Willans’ presentation, Mayor Glant Havenar said she was concerned the property might become a residential development in the future. She said it might be as long as six years before the town sees any financial benefit. Richard Willan said residential development at Elephant Rock could not happen without the consent of the board. Trustee Shana Ball argued that the current board can’t control future boards. Powell said the Willans’ proposal would save the town the cost of asbestos abatement and landscaping that would follow demolition of the cabins.

Town Administrator Dawn Collins said the Elephant Rock property is a planned unit development, which means the town has more control over the development process.

The board returned to their discussion of the Willans’ proposal later

in the meeting as a separate agenda item. Ball said she likes the ideas the Willans presented. Trustee Kevin Dreher reminded the board it has voted three times to demolish the cabins. He said the Willans’ plan was not in the best interest of the town. Trustee Dennis Stern said he was optimistic but wanted to lock down the details of management.

Reid Wiecks, chair of the Parks and Trails Commission, echoed Dreher’s comments. He said if the cabins and long house were demolished the property would be unique in northern El Paso County. He argued using the property as a “passive park” would raise property values and increase property tax revenue received by the town. Wiecks characterized the Willans’ proposal as a seven-home residential development and argued the buildings were not historical, were likely built in the 1970s and therefore not eligible for grants to preserve historical buildings. He expressed concern that the Willans’ plan might conflict with the trail that has been proposed for the property and has been partially built.

Trustee Nick Ehrhardt said he had voted to demolish the cabins because there was no alternative proposal and if the Willans’ plan doesn’t work out, the town could still demolish the buildings because the town would own them. He liked the fact that the town is not responsible for management.

Collins said there was no overall plan for the Elephant Rock property and mentioned that using a portion of the site for a public safety building to house the Police and Fire Departments had been discussed in the past. She called for a meeting that would include all interested departments to work out a plan for the entire property.

Havenar said Trustees Jessica Farr and Samantha Padgett were excused from the meeting and she was reluctant to decide without their input. She felt the finances were not clear, and the proposal would mean a lot of work for town staff. She lamented the fact that the Elephant Rock property had become a burden and a cause for contention.

The discussion ended with the board deciding to hold a meeting with all stakeholders, including the board, the Parks and Trails Commission, the Planning Commission, and the Police and Fire Departments to build a consensus for how to develop the property.

Application for Ben Lomand annexation withdrawn

Attorney Scott Krob told the board that the United Congregational Church had withdrawn its application for the annexation of its Ben Lomand property. The board had suggested some changes to the annexation agreement that the church had submitted, but the church would not consider any changes to the agreement. The church’s attorney sent the town a letter indicating that if the town did not accept the original annexation agreement the church would withdraw its application, Krob said. The board was polled electronically and decided not to hold a special meeting to further discuss the application. On March 14 the church formally withdrew its application, Krob said.

Havenar said the board did not agree with the annexation proposal’s plans for the top of Ben Lomand mountain, the requirement that the town take responsibility for County Line Road, and the stipulation that the church would not need to manage changes through the town’s Planning Commission. The original agreement was not in the best interest of the town, she said.

“Pocket neighborhood” requires conditional use permit

A public hearing was held to consider a request from Rebecca Albright and Philip Tedeschi for a conditional use

permit that would allow them to move forward with the development of detached single-family residences and duplex units between Clarence Street and Spruce Avenue, adjacent to Ben Lomand mountain. There would be a total of nine residences, Albright said, perhaps three single-family residences and three duplexes or five single-family residences and two duplexes. The “pocket neighborhood” would consist of smaller, affordable, attainable housing located around a common open space, Albright explained. The plan calls for the residences and duplexes to use septic systems since the town does not provide sewer service to the property, but the town’s municipal code does not permit multi-family residences to use septic

systems.

Albright said the property is currently zoned C1 (general business and commercial zoning), but single- and multi-family residences are a conditional use of property zoned C1. She asked the board to grant a conditional use permit and to consider changing its water tap fees to help make the residences affordable. Collins said the town’s code would need to be amended to allow multi-family residences such as duplexes to use septic systems.

Krob said the resolution that would grant the conditional use permit would only take effect if the town amends by Aug. 1 its code to allow the use of septic systems for multi-family residences. The town would



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not change the code without parameters set by the town's engineer to govern septic systems for multi-family residences.

The public hearing was closed, and the board voted in favor of Resolution 21-2024.

Water tap transferred

Havenar told the board that Nikki McDonald and John Cressman, both of whom had served as mayor of Palmer Lake, had recently sold a property on Greeley Avenue. Havenar was the real estate agent who handled the sale. Four water taps were associated with the property, but the buyer only wanted to build three houses, leaving one of the taps available, Havenar said. McDonald had paid the monthly charge for the tap and would like to retain ownership of the tap and transfer it to another property she owns, Havenar said.

The board packet not-

ed that water taps can't be transferred according to the town's code.

The board voted unanimously to allow McDonald to transfer the tap to another property.

Administrative and Fire Department reports

In her administrative report, Collins told the board public works equipment operator Blake Bloom would start this week. An accounting clerk would start on April 8. Collins said there were no applicants for the supervisor position in the Public Works Department, so she had initiated some recruiting assistance to hire someone on a temporary basis. Unused wages would cover the recruiting costs, she said.

Collins commended police officer Adam Lundy for accepting the position of interim police chief following the resignation of Jason Vanderpool. She also congratu-

lated officer Eugene Ramirez on his promotion to corporal. In April, a consultant would be brought in to review the Police Department and make policy and structure recommendations.

Lundy said there were lots of things in motion in the Police Department and he was glad to have the support of the town to get through the changes.

Fire Chief John Vincent told the board that the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts had obtained a temporary certificate of occupancy, allowing the building to be open to the public. He said training on operating the department's woodchipper was underway. He discussed how controlled burns can be used to reduce fire danger and mentioned a controlled burn near the Shiloh Pines neighborhood planned by the Forest Service that would take place over several days beginning

in late May.

Vincent mentioned he had found a vehicle to replace the department's Chevrolet Suburban after a search that began in October. He asked the board for authorization to purchase the replace vehicle for \$35,000; the board authorized him to proceed with the purchase.

Executive session

The March 28 meeting was preceded by an executive session to discuss negotiating positions on a possible sale of town property and to receive legal advice concerning the separation of former Police Chief Jason Vanderpool.

No actions were taken following the executive session.

The next regular board meetings are scheduled for April 11 and 25. All meetings will be held at the Town Hall. See the town's website at www.townofpalmerlake.com to confirm times and dates of board meetings and workshops. Meetings are typically held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month at the Town Hall. Information: 719-481-2953.

James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me. Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, March 11 Board hears update on the Loop

By James Howald

At its March meeting, the Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) board heard operational reports from District Manager Jessie Shaffer, Operations Superintendent Dan LaFontaine, District Engineer Ariel Hacker, board Treasurer Roy Martinez, and board Secretary Bill Clewe, who also serves as the district's liaison with the Joint Use Committee (JUC), which oversees the Tri-Lakes Waste Water Treatment Facility. The meeting ended with an executive session.

Loop water reuse project advances

In his Manager's Report, Shaffer told the board he expected a report on Colorado Springs Utility's Edward Bailey Water Treatment Facility (EBWTF) to be complete in March. The report will help the Loop board decide if the EBWTF can be used to treat the Loop's water, or if the Loop will need to build its own treatment facility. That decision will be a large factor in determining the total cost of the water reuse project.

Shaffer said the Loop was also working on pipeline alignments and easement acquisitions, and on the financial documents that will define the roles and responsibilities of the participating districts. The documents will address the question of whether the participating districts will lease water rights to the Loop. See the Loop article on page 14.

Shaffer also discussed bills under consideration by the state Legislature that could affect the district. A bill concerning Accessory Dwelling Units could have an impact on local land use policies, he said. Dick Brown, the district's lobbyist, is also watching HB24-1379, which would create a state-run permit system to regulate when developers can dig up and fill in streams and wetlands. A second bill on that issue is expected.

Large water loss noted

LaFontaine told the board that the water report for February showed a 19% water loss. He said that, in addition to three other leaks, a service line to the Country Club at Woodmoor had failed and three days passed before the underground leak was identified. The lost water did not flow through the sewer system and may have made its way to Monument Creek, he said. LaFontaine said he was continuing to investigate the water loss.

He reported that the water meter replacement proj-

ect was going well, with 12 to 14 meters a day being replaced. He estimated half the year's goal for meter replacement would be met by April. He thanked the office staff for their effective communication with customers regarding meter replacement.

Engineering report

Hacker said Wildcat Construction would complete WWSD's portion of the first phase of the Highway 105 expansion by April. Well 22, located on the southside of County Line Road, is pushing ahead, she said, and the transmission pipeline could be installed by summer if the county permitting process goes well. Installation of the pressure reducing valves required by the Monument Junction development would begin in March and should be complete in June, she said. A sewer capacity study was getting underway and planning for an additional storage tank for redundancy is beginning.

Water sales improve

In his financial report, Martinez noted that water sales were up in February, despite a fair amount of precipitation. Sewer revenue was on target, he said. The district's repair or replace program was at 27% of the annual allocation due to general maintenance expenses and costs associated with Lake Woodmoor.

JUC receives hardware
Clewe told the board that the JUC had received two blowers, used to aerate sewage, from a sanitation district in Lafayette, Colo. The blowers are twice the size of the units they are replacing, he said, and they have variable frequency drives that pump less or more air at different times, which results in electrical cost savings.

Executive session

The board held an executive session to receive legal advice on Water Court Case 12CW1 and potential agreements with Enerfin Renewables, LLC, JWI, Inc., and El Paso County. No actions were taken following the executive session.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 8 at 1 p.m. Meetings are usually held on the second Monday of each month at 1 p.m. at the district office at 1845 Woodmoor Drive; please see www.woodmoorwater.com or call 719-488-2525 to verify meeting times and locations. James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me.



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Monument Sanitation District, March 20

Property owner petitions for inclusion

By Jackie Burhans and James Howald

The Monument Sanitation District (MSD) board held a public hearing March 20 on a homeowner's petition for inclusion in the MSD service area. The board also heard an operational report from District Manager Mark Parker.

Failing septic system prompts request

Parker told the board that he had been approached by Rick Squires, the owner of a 2.8-acre property at 128 Monument Lake Rd., to provide sewer service to the property. Parker opened a public hearing to consider the request.

Parker explained that the leech field of the septic system at Squires' property was failing, and El Paso County would not issue a permit to repair or replace it since MSD had sewer infrastructure close to the property. Parker said that Squires would pay all costs required to bring sewer service to his property. Those costs would include an \$8,000 sewer tap fee and the cost of a lift station like the one in place at the Wakonda Hills neighborhood, as well as legal fees.

It was difficult to locate the MSD sewer main, Parker said. He believed the locating equipment did not correctly measure the depth of the

pipeline. The pipeline runs under railroad tracks, Parker said, which added a complication to providing service.

There were no comments from the public, and Parker closed the hearing.

The board voted unanimously to approve the petition for inclusion.

Manager's report

In his manager's report, Parker told the board that accumulated grease had been pumped out of the Wakonda Hills lift station.

He said the upgrade of the district's supervisory control and data acquisition system (SCADA), which controls, monitors and analyzes the district's sewer infra-

structure, had gone well so far but had revealed that the radios used by the system are no longer available to purchase and newer models are not backward compatible. Parker said replacing the radios would cost \$16,000 if done now; next year the cost would go up to \$25,000. He recommended immediate replacement.

Internet connectivity is in place at all the SCADA sites, Parker said, and he recommended that connectivity become the primary method of connecting the SCADA sites, with radios moving into a backup role. Parker said he would bring a detailed proposal to the next board meet-

ing for consideration.

Monument Sanitation District meetings are held at 9 a.m. on the third Wednesday of the month in the district conference room at 130 Second St., Monument. The next regular meeting is scheduled for April 17. See <https://colorado.gov/msd>. For a district service map, see <https://colorado.gov/pacific/msd/district-map-0>. Information: 719-481-4886.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me. James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me.

Triview Metropolitan District, March 20

Additional acre-feet of water decreed; escrow agreement approved

By Natalie Barszcz

The Triview Metropolitan District (TMD) board held its regular meeting a day earlier than originally scheduled. The board heard about the district receiving an unexpected amount of additional acre-feet of water decreed from the Arkansas Valley Irrigation Co. (AVIC), approved an escrow agreement with a landowner, received multiple updates on the district's projects, and heard about the snow removal efforts during the mid-March winter storm that delivered about 24 inches in some areas of the district. An executive session was held to discuss various matters.

Secretary/Treasurer James Barnhart was excused.

Extra acre-feet of water decreed

District Manager James McGrady said AVIC had decreed an average annual yield of about 569.4 acre-feet of water. The district had been hoping for 526 acre-feet and had initially purchased about 435 acre-feet of water. The additional water cost to the district is about \$688,775, for a total cost of about \$5.9 million for the water rights. The district budgeted for the overage, but will need to make some adjustments, he said.

Escrow agreement approved

Water attorney Chris Cummins of Monson, Cummins, Shohet and Farr LLC law firm said in 2020 when the district purchased the Stonewall Springs Reservoir complex and the Excelsior Ditch and that batch of assets that the district contracted to receive an outlet easement from the east reservoir to be built in the future when the last reservoir is built, but the seller could not deliver. The district escrowed \$300,000 in May 2020 at closing to obtain the easement from the landowner to put water in the river. After a series of extensions, \$150,000 of the escrow money was released to Stonewall Springs Water LLC because the easement was unlikely to cost \$300,000. McGrady finally reached an agreement with the landowner to purchase the easement for \$45,000. The final post-closing agreement will release \$105,000 to Stonewall Springs Water LLC, and the remaining \$45,000 will be released to the district to pay the landowner for the easement, Cummins said.

The board approved the final closing escrow agreement and final release between the Stonewall Springs

Quarry LLC and TMD, 4-0.

Northern Delivery System update

McGrady said the NDS total project cost including Segment D is about \$22.274 million and Kiewit has earned about \$19.687 million, about 88% of the overall project, and the only remaining item is completion of the pump station. The district owes just over \$2 million to finish the pump station. The district is expecting substantial completion around July 5. The pump house will contain two pumps with room for a third. Testing of the system is expected in June and then a ribbon cutting around July 10 at the Highway 83 Colorado

Springs Utilities water tank.

Vice President Anthony Sexton asked if the project was over budget by about \$1 million.

McGrady said not quite because the district had the materials to install the Segment D (Conexus development) pipeline, and Kiewit billed about \$200,000 worth of labor for that installation, and the rest was about \$500,000 in over runs on the project.

Water movement and exchanges

McGrady said the district began moving water out of the South Reservoir on March 18 and expects to move about 30 cubic feet

per second, making a release downstream from the South Reservoir and exchanging water up into Pueblo Reservoir. The goal is to exchange about 1,000 acre-feet out of the South Reservoir to create a "bucket" to capture spring snow melt. The snowpack in the Arkansas River Valley is at about 104% (low estimate) and additional snows and rain over the next six weeks will potentially generate about 120 acre-feet a day.

The district is juggling storage to help capture spring melt and will start releasing water from the Big Johnson Reservoir beginning the first week of April. The exchange will pay the Arkansas

Groundwater and Reservoir Association (AGRA) back in water, because all the water in the South Reservoir technically belongs to AGRA, he said.

Note: AGRA is a water utility company located in Fowler.

Sexton said the water exchanges are fictional and never physical.

Cummins said the water is diverted at the upstream source and water is released at the downstream source, and we pretend the water released at the downstream source is what was stored at the upstream source. There are limited windows to complete an exchange, and it must occur when there is

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enough water in the middle, so that other parties with water rights are not injured when water is taken from the upstream source. It is a complex concept and does not involve actual water molecules, he said.

Assistant Manager Steve Sheffield said that at the direction of AGRA, the district released 100 acre-feet of water into the John Martin Reservoir on March 1-7.

Assistant manager's update

Sheffield said the following:

- He took a field trip to the Fountain Mutual Irrigation Co. headgate and diversion structures in Colorado Springs to look for potential improvements.
- He attended the Northern Monument Creek Interceptor "kick-off" meeting hosted by Colorado Springs Utilities.
- Made multiple site visits to the NDS pump house (under construction on the east side of Highway 83 at Old Northgate Road).
- Met with Tom Martinez of the Town of Monument (TOM) Planning Department to discuss and obtain approval for a right-turn lane on Leather Chaps Drive for the Bear Creek Elementary school pickup/drop-off improvements. Everyone agrees on the striping of the road, and the project is moving forward.
- Met with TOM Manager Mike Foreman and Public Works Department Director Tom Tharnish to discuss a potential interconnect between TMD and the town.
- Initiated the plan for a new security system at A yard with the district staff.

- Approved construction of a "distribution" trailer to be fully stocked for emergencies and maintenance purposes.
- Since January, the Vac truck and TV van cleaned and videoed 660 feet of sewer line. Three under-drain caps were found to be missing and replaced. The district maintains a parts trailer to replace missing and defective equipment.

Snow removal around the clock

This reporter thanked Superintendent Matt Rayno and the snowplow crews for the phenomenal job of keeping the streets plowed throughout the March 13-15 snowstorm.

Rayno said the snow removal crews worked around the clock during the snowstorm, keeping the streets passable in the district. Crews stayed with it to keep ahead of the storm, with prior budgeting for housing at The Fairfield Inn during major snow events staff operated on six-hour shifts throughout the storm. One truck completed over 300 miles during the snow event, and when a starter went out on a large truck, it was back in service within the day, he said.

Public Works and Parks and Open Space update

Rayno said the following:

- The final preparations are being made for the patching, mill, and overlay of Gleneagle Drive in the Promontory Pointe subdivision.
- An audit of the concrete within the district is underway to assess the condition of sidewalk and curb edging throughout the district. Bids will go out in April for

- the repairs.
- Street sweeping was completed on Jackson Creek Parkway and Leather Chaps, Lyons Tails, Kitchener, Gleneagle and Sanctuary Rim Drives. The inner district roads are scheduled for sweeping in April.
- The construction of the Burke Hollow Park is scheduled to begin on April 8. The district staff will save about \$6,000 by removing the equipment before the contractors install a new playground.
- Enhancements are being made to the trail on Saint Lawrence Way and the Gleneagle Drive swing park.
- Spring preparations for the landscaped areas had begun.

Legal updates

District counsel George Rowley of White Bear Ankele Tanaka and Waldron law firm said the loan with the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) had been finalized.

McGrady said the loan extension discussed in October was approved by CWCB to cover additional overages at the South Reservoir. The loan for \$450,000 retains the original 2.05% interest rate and is accounted for in the 2024 budget as a reimbursement to the district, and payments will not begin until 2025. See www.ocn.me/v23n11.htm#tmd. The district is exploring the possibility of raising money to construct a slurry wall at the Central Reservoir, and an application for the loan with CWBC is expected to be presented to the board for approval in May.

Rowley said that since the last Legislature session, special district websites are required to be in compliance with full accessibility standards by July 2024. Sites must be available to individuals with disabilities, such as easily readable fonts, text size, and

colors. Remediating old documents may be time consuming and removing them may be the simpler option, or employing a third party to correct any issues could ease the burden. Noncompliance could lead to fines, Rowley said.

McGrady said he meets with GroundFloor media, the district's public relations firm, every other week and it assures the district it is familiar with the new requirements. GroundFloor media receives \$5,000 on a retainer per month for producing the district newsletter, public relations and website maintenance. GroundFloor has been pro-active in ensuring compliance and saw the regulations in advance, but he and Rowley would approach the subject again to ensure the district is compliant, McGrady said.

Executive session

The board moved into an executive session at 7:12 p.m. pursuant to Colorado Revised Statute 24-6-402(4) (a), (b), (e), to discuss acquisitions, negotiations, and receive legal advice on: water and land acquisitions, the Highway Users Tax Fund share return, strategic planning, economic development incentives, and change case updates.

Sheffield confirmed the board returned to the regular session at 9:29 p.m. No actions were taken, and the board promptly adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Meetings are usually held on the third Thursday of every month at the district office located at 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for April 25 at 5:30 p.m. For meeting agendas, minutes, and update, visit <https://triviewmetro.com>.

Natalie Barszcz can be reached at nataliebarszcz@ocn.me.

Donala Water and Sanitation District, March 21

Good news on radium, PFAS

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans
At its March meeting, the Donala Water and Sanitation District (DWSD) board heard good news on water quality from General Manager Jeff Hodge. El Paso County Commissioner Holly Williams gave the board an overview of the county's study of the Denver basin aquifers. The board also heard operational reports.

Radium and PFAS at low levels
Hodge told the board that the hydrous manganese oxide (HMO) adsorption technology the district had implemented had reduced radium in the water DWSD delivers to its customers from the Holbein water treatment plant. The maximum contaminant level for radium is 5 pCi/L and DWSD water had tested at 5.1 pCi/L in 2022, Hodge said. Recent testing showed radium at 1.2 pCi/L, well within the limit set by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Hodge gave the board information developed by Merrick Inc., the engineering company DWSD hired to design its HMO system, that told the history of the radium mitigation project. The presentation tracked the project from the enforcement order DWSD received in 2022 through the third cycle of radium testing completed in December 2023. The project included new equipment and training for staff. The materials credited the district's culture of transparent collaborative decision-making as contributing to the success of the effort.

Board President Wayne Vanderschuere pointed out that DWSD had used federal funds allocated to the district by the El Paso Board of County Commissioners effectively.

Hodge also had good news concerning the level of PFAS chemicals in district water. PFAS, the common name for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, which are used in a wide variety of consumer products, have been linked to diseases such as kidney and testicular cancer. Hodge said the district's water did not contain a measurable amount of PFAS at present, but testing would continue.

Williams discusses county water availability study

Williams opened her discussion of a

water availability study planned by the county by making a distinction between "paper water"—that is, legal rights to water—and "wet water," that is, water in the ground. Williams said the county has not done a study of the Denver basin aquifers since the 1980s and wants a better understanding of the current state of those aquifers. The aquifers are depleting, she said, adding, "there's not as much water as we thought there was."

Williams said the county commissioners wanted DWSD, Triview Metropolitan District, Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, Monument Water Department, Palmer Lake Water Department and Forest Lakes Metropolitan District to contribute data to the study.

Williams said the county has a 300-year water rule, adopted in the 1980s, that requires new developments to prove access to adequate water for that length of time. Hydraulic conditions have changed since then. Other entities have a 100-year threshold, she said. Williams said there is plenty of room to grow in the Black Forest neighborhood.

Williams said the study would assess the available water in each of the Denver basin aquifers, identify the top and bottom of each aquifer, and evaluate geospatial data to assess potential limitations on water availability. A final report would be written that would guide water supply regulations. Williams said lot sizes could be adjusted to make available water last longer.

Vanderschuere said DWSD had reached similar conclusions and had begun investigating indirect potable reuse, aquifer storage and recovery, and direct potable reuse.

Operational reports

- In his financial report, Hodge noted water sales are slow, as they always are at this time of year. Expenses are on track. Hodge also mentioned that the district's audit went well.
- Consultant Brett Gracely, of LRE Water, told the board DWSD has been awarded a \$290,000 grant from the Colorado Water Conservation Board to continue the

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DONALA (Cont. from 12)

district's work on aquifer storage and recovery, a technology that pumps excess water back into aquifers for storage and future use.

The next board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 18 at 1:30 p.m. Generally, board meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at 1:30 p.m. and include online access; call (719) 488-3603 or access www.donalawater.org to receive up-to-date meeting information. The district office is located

at 15850 Holbein Drive, Colorado Springs. James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me. Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me

El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority, March 21**Board debates relationship to CS**

By James Howald

At a brief meeting in March, the El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority (EPCRLWA, or the Loop) board heard a progress report from John Kuosman, a water practice leader with Merrick and Co., who also serves as the Loop Water Authority's project planning and workflow manager. Board President Jessie Shaffer gave a financial report. The board also held an executive session.

Alignment study underway

Kuosman told the board that the alignment study, which will address the locations of pipelines and easements required to convey water from Fountain Creek northward to customers in the participating water districts, is underway and he expected it to be complete by the end of March.

At a previous meeting, Rebecca Hutchinson, a consultant with Merrick who is working on pipeline and easement issues for the Loop, told the board that she has contracted with two companies that specialize in easement investigations and acquisitions. Kimley-Horn is working on the pipelines and easements for the southern half of the project and Western States Land Services LLC is working on the

northern half of the project, she explained.

Kuosman asked the board members to have their thoughts on the commitments that will be required of the participating water districts submitted to attorney Russ Dykstra of Spencer Fane LLC by March 28. Dykstra is drafting the contract that participating districts will sign to formalize their participation in the project.

Kuosman said progress had been made in defining treatment options for the water that will be diverted from Fountain Creek and he would provide details during the executive session.

Finances reviewed

Shaffer told the board that the Loop's accountant, Kathy Fromm, of Fromm and Co., had suggested two companies for the board to consider as auditors: Haynie and Co. and Stockman Kast Ryan + Co. Shaffer said the federal grant money received by the Loop required more rigorous auditing procedures and the board would need to advise Fromm about choosing between the two auditing companies. The board voted to authorize Shaffer to continue to work with Fromm on this decision.

Shaffer said he had received invoices for the

month totaling \$32,932, with Bishop Brogden and Associates, Fromm and Co., and Merrick Inc. being the largest service suppliers. The board authorized Shaffer to pay the invoices.

Executive session

The meeting ended with an executive session to receive legal advice from the Loop's attorney regarding negotiating strategies and to hear a discussion of water treatment options from Kuosman. No votes were taken after the executive session.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for April 18 at 9 a.m. Regular meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month at 9 a.m. at the Monument Town Hall at 645 Beacon Lite Road. Workshop meetings are held the first Thursday of each month at 9 a.m. at the Cherokee Metropolitan District offices at 6250 Palmer Park Blvd., Colorado Springs. Please see loopwater.org or call 719-488-3603 to verify meeting times and locations.

James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me.

Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, March 6**Real property exclusion/inclusion approved**

By Natalie Barszcz

The Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) board met on March 6 and conducted a public hearing on the proposed exclusion of the majority of real property within the district's jurisdiction pursuant to Colorado Revised Statute 32-1-501(1.5) so that it may be included into the jurisdiction of Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) dba Monument Fire District (MFD).

Director Mike Forsythe joined the meeting at 4:52 p.m.

Real property exclusion/inclusion proposal

The district's attorney, Emily Powell of Ireland Stapleton Pryor Pascoe PC law firm, attending in person, said the district and TLMFPD had been working since 2022 to merge the two agencies into a single fire protection district that will provide fire protection services to the combined area. TLMFPD will be the surviving district and will officially change its name to "Monument Fire District" to reflect the broader geographic area of the district.

Powell said the merger process is at the point of the inclusion and exclusion of real property, a process that is similar to the way a municipality might annex or de-annex property. Shortly before the meeting, the TLMFPD board held a public hearing and the board agreed to include all the properties within the Wescott area into its boundaries. All except two properties will remain within the district after the inclusion/exclusion process is complete. Those properties belong to the two board members who will continue as directors to assist her in the final dissolution of DWFPD. Upon completion of the dissolution process, the two remaining properties will be included into the MFD boundaries. The inclusion/exclusion process will take place on the same day to prevent any lapse in fire protection services, she said. See www.ocn.me/v24n1.htm#dwfspd.

Public hearing

The board opened the public hearing on the exclusion and inclusion of property, and Powell confirmed the notice of the hearing had been published as required by law.

Volunteer Pension Board Trustee Dennis Feltz said 14-year former Wescott volunteer firefighter Dan Milano had passed away on Feb. 20, 2024. Milano and several firefighters had survived with injuries from falling through the burning roof of the Yorkshire Apartments in May 1976, but the fire claimed the lives of firefighter Donald Wescott and

three occupants. DWFPD was built by the community and volunteers, and the district adopted the name Donald Wescott in 1981 to memorialize the loss of Wescott.

Feltz said that in the past, a downfall happened (when revenue was lost along with rooftops) and the department was mismanaged, but since the merger began the district stations on Gleneagle Drive and Highway 83/Stage Coach Road are now fully staffed with professional firefighters. A lot of changes have occurred since the paid professional staff took over, and Feltz thanked Fire Chief Andy Kovacs for ensuring the firefighters are always turned out professionally and the on-duty volunteer firefighters are no longer spotted in gym shorts and flip-flops at King Soopers.

The growth is significant within the region, and a study recommending Wescott merge with the Monument departments in the 1990s only resulted in the Woodmoor/Monument Fire Protection District (WMFPD) being taken over in 2008 by TLMFPD. Since the initial study, further studies recommended the triangle be completed to include the Wescott district. Feltz hopes everything keeps growing and the chief extends the leadership into the future, and history will repeat itself with another successful merger, he said.

Note: A brief history on the formation of the DWFPD can be found at <https://monumentfire.org>.

The board approved the resolutions in the certified order.

Powell said a 30-day waiting period would ensue before anything happens legally, even though both boards have agreed to the exclusion and inclusion of property. The El Paso County District Court will issue a public order after recognizing all the correct steps have been made. The boundary change will be official after the documents are recorded at the El Paso County Clerk and Recorder Office. The process is dependent on the court's calendar, but it is hoped that it will be completed in April.

Treasurer Duane Garrett said the districts have gone back and forth for years to make the merger happen, and finally the right people were in place. He is excited for the future of the district and ready to move onto the next chapter as an MFD board director.

President Mark Gunderman said the concept of a merger had been 20 years in the making and both boards had been working on the merger for

four years. The department is modernizing the stations, providing better pay for the firefighters, and implementing new technology. The merger was the right thing to do for the community and the firefighters, he said. The district only encountered a few minor bumps in the road along the way, and he thanked Powell, the executive staff, and the combined district firefighters for their efforts.

Powell thanked the staff, the board directors, and the attendees at every meeting for their support during the merger process. "It was a heavy lift for everyone" and she was currently involved with four fire department mergers, she said.

Chief's report

Fire Chief Kovacs said:

- Battalion Chief Micah Coyle had moved from shift commander to an administrative role as the Executive Battalion Chief on Jan. 1.
- On Jan. 6, the district responded to an out-building structure fire off Stepler Road that resulted in about \$35,000 in property loss.
- The Type 6 brush truck had deployed to Bent County for about 36 hours on March 4.
- The Career Fire Academy was well underway with eight students from the district on track to graduate on May 3. A district student had returned to shift duty due to an injury sustained during the training.
- The district's combined staff completed 628 hours of training in January.
- The Station 4 remodel is underway, and completion is expected in August.

Note: The Station 4 (Gleneagle Drive) Engine Company is operating from Colorado Springs Fire Department Station 22 (Voyager Parkway and Copper Center Parkway) during the remodel. See www.ocn.me/v24n2.htm#mfd and the MFD article below for additional information.

The meeting adjourned at 5:06 p.m.

Meetings are typically held on the fourth Wednesday at Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. The next regular meeting will be held on April 24 at 4:30 p.m. For Zoom meetings instructions, agendas, minutes, and updates, visit www.monumentfire.org or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

Natalie Barszcz can be reached at nataliebarszcz@ocn.me.

Monument Fire District, Feb. 28, March 6 and 27**Wescott property inclusion approved; land purchase agreements discussed**

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Monument Fire District meeting on Feb. 28, the board held a public hearing before approving the inclusion of two unincorporated El Paso County properties in the Forest View Acres subdivision, approved the 2024 Employee Handbook, and received an update on the Station 3 rebuild land purchase agreement.

The board held a special meeting on March 6 to conduct a public hearing for the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District dba Monument Fire District (MFD) and Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) inclusion/exclusion of real property process.

On March 27, the board received information about the land purchase costs to rebuild Station 3, received an after-action storm report for the mid-March snow event, and held a lengthy discussion on the opportunity to purchase acreage for a future sixth station.

Fire Chief Andy Kovacs was absent for the Feb. 28 and the March 27 meetings.

President Mike Smaldino and Secretary Jason Buckingham were excused on March 27.

Property inclusions—Forest View Acres

At the Feb. 28 meeting, the board held a public hearing for the following two properties seeking to be included into the district:

- Resolution 2024-06 Gould property, 738 Forest View Way.
- Resolution 2024-07 Thulin property, 4035 Deer Creek Valley Court.

Hearing no comments in favor or opposition, the board closed the hearing. In a roll call vote, the board approved the real property inclusions. Vice President John Hildebrandt abstained in the roll call vote due to audio difficulties via Zoom.

Note: The district received a list of properties from the El Paso County Sheriff's Office (EPCSO) identifying properties within the greater district boundaries that had not been officially recorded within the district. The district informed each of the prop-

erty owners via letter, asking if they would like to be included into the district for fire protection and EMS services. See www.ocn.me/v24n1.htm#mfd.

2024 Employee Handbook

Division Chief of Community Risk Jonathan Bradley said the board is required to approve each change to the 2024 Employee Handbook. The executive staff must refer to the board to make administration amendments throughout the year, and the fire chief is seeking board approval to make any minor stylistic changes consistent with district practices, without going back to the board.

Local 4319 President Engineer Christian Schmidt said the Local 4319 was always given the opportunity to review the Employee Handbook before any changes are presented to the board.

The board unanimously approved the MFD 2024 Employee Handbook and granted the fire chief authority to make minor changes throughout the year.

Station 3 rebuild update

John Sattler, vice president of NVS Program Management, representing the district and overseeing the new Station 3 rebuild and the station remodeling projects, said the preliminary design and a program had been developed since September 2023 and a design workshop is scheduled to begin in early April with OZ Architects. See www.ocn.me/v23n9.htm#mfd. The selection of the site and the development of the purchase and sale agreement with the developer/seller is a complicated arrangement that exposes the district to some unusual risks, because normally a finished lot would be purchased and the site selected (adjacent and north of the YMCA, Jackson Creek Parkway) has yet to be subdivided and developed for public improvements.

The due diligence components total about \$40,000 to \$50,000 for the geo-technical investigation, survey plat, phase 1 environmental study, and a 10-month design adapted for the site. If another site needs to be selected, the design could still fit. The wild card will be the platting and subdivision approval process (about nine months) through the Town of Monument (TOM), but getting the clock started by executing the purchase and sale agreement and providing earnest money is key to obligate the seller to begin the process with the TOM.

The entire process is anticipated to take about 30 months, with a 12-month construction period and completion in 2027. Due to the town's six-month moratorium on planning approvals that began in January, it is unknown how long the TOM will take to approve the development. The board will be briefed if the developer runs into a roadblock or dead end and further strategies will be discussed to move the rebuild process along, Sattler said. See www.ocn.me/v24n2.htm#mfd.

The meeting adjourned at 7:29 p.m. on Feb. 28.

Fire Station 3 land purchase agreement

At the March 27 meeting, Sattler said the purchase and sale agreement for Fire Station 3 land had fallen short of being presented for approval on the action item agenda, and approval will require a special meeting. However, an agreement in principle had been reached earlier that day with legal counsel, Kovacs, himself, and the sellers. The Station 3 lot purchase price for 2.06 acres is about \$1.3 million, substantiated by a third-party appraisal completed last year for \$15 per square foot.

Future obligations for board approval will be the pro-rated construction for the shared access driveway into the subdivision, the initial traffic signal pro-rated with other occupants, and the future widening of Jackson Creek Parkway that is likely to happen after the station is built. The widening will have no impact on the usable acreage and the cost share of about \$1.5 million is expected to be about \$300,000 for the district. The total obligation is estimated to be about \$1.7 million (does not include building the station). The request for action at the special meeting will be about \$1.3 million and a \$25,000 earnest money check to the seller. The earnest money will not be returned should the district need to back out, Sattler said.

Division Chief of Administration Jamey Bumgarner said the district anticipated the costs to begin the project and budgeted \$2.4 million for the lot purchase price, infrastructure costs, and design phase for 2024.

Wescott real property inclusion

At the March 6 special meeting, the board held a public hearing pursuant to a notice published in The Gazette to consider proposed Resolution 2024-09 and a certified order approving the inclusion into the district's jurisdiction of the real property within the jurisdiction of DWFPD (except two properties that will remain until the board dissolves upon the dissolution of the district). See DWFPD article on page 14.

The DWFPD district attorney, Emily Powell of Ireland Stapleton Pryor Pascoe PC law firm, confirmed the intergovernmental agreement remains in place to allow for uninterrupted fire protection and Emergency Medical Support (EMS) services. DWFPD will exist until the merger is completed, she said. After hearing no comments from the public, the board closed the hearing.

The board approved the inclusion of real property in a roll call vote. The meeting adjourned at 3:39 p.m. on March 6.

2024 winter storm after-action review

At the MFD March 27 meeting, Executive Battalion Chief Micah Coyle said over the past five years,

three large regional snowstorms occurred around mid-March, and the district expects major snow events similar to the event March 13-15 to occur again. He thanked the district's regional partners, the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), Monument Police Department (MPD), Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD), and Palmer Lake Fire Department (PLFD). A Joint Command Center in preparation for the storm was set up at the Monument Town Hall, operating as a 911 call center to cover calls for MFD, PLFD, BFFRPD, Falcon District 5, and MPD. MPD and the TOM Public Works Department operated from the center. Crews were dispatched according to location with BFFRPD handling the east division along with Station 2 and 5, and Stations 1, 3, and 4, and PLFD handling the west.

The Red Cross set up a shelter at St. Peter Catholic Church for stranded motorists. Thankfully citizens heeded the storm warnings and stayed home, reducing the number of incidents to the rescue of four stranded motorists, one ambulance transport and a traffic accident. The district's new plow was beneficial for emergency operations, but there were a few areas typically retaining large drifts and the plow became stuck in north Woodmoor, and off County Line Road and east of Highway 83 when called in to assist crews responding to medical calls. New drivers are being trained to operate the 1967 Snowcat, but an oil leak was noticed after training and repairs are being made, he said.

Bumgarner said the district just missed out on purchasing a 1990s replacement Snowcat with a trailer caboose from a rebuild center in La Junta last month. It had a good price point and sold quickly for about \$125,000.

Coyle said many truck drivers were exiting at Baptist Road to find a spot to camp at the gas station rest stops, and the area quickly became inundated with an overflow of commercial vehicles. For several hours MPD helped redirect many commercial vehicles that had become stuck and needed to turn around. That helped while signs were put in place instructing commercial vehicles not to exit at Baptist Road. A district employee liaising at the OEM heard about plans to close I-25 and fortunately via Zoom call, statements to CDOT helped keep the corridor open. An I-25 closure typically increases the possibility of tricky rescues as motorists seek alternative plowed routes, Coyle said.

Bumgarner said about 24 to 30 inches of snow fell with drifting in various locations, and Crystal Park above Manitou Springs received 51 inches. The district may need to discuss an additional plow attachment for an existing vehicle in the future.

Fire Station 6 land purchase

Bumgarner said the QuikTrip Corp. had offered the district two options to purchase 2 acres for about \$1.165 million for a future Station 6, or a little over four acres on the lot for about \$2.330 million. The district budgeted \$500,000 for the land purchase in 2024 with the anticipation that \$500,000 could also be taken from the Impact Fee Fund. If the 4-acre option is chosen, some funds could be taken from the Station 2 remodel project, or a loan could be taken out for the remainder of about \$1.333 million plus interest and be paid off in 2025. The land is west of the QuikTrip gas station and restaurant off Terrazzo Drive and Baptist Road. The square footage price offered is below the market price, he said.

Director Roger Lance asked if the district could sell the 2 acres in the future if the district did not need all four after building Station 6.

Bumgarner said the district would have the option to sell the remaining acreage after building on the lot.

Treasurer Tom Kelly said he would prefer to retain the funds for the Station 3 project and only purchase the 2 acres needed for the standard-size fire station.

Bumgarner confirmed that all the road infrastructure, water, and utilities are in place.

Director Randall Estes asked Bumgarner why the district sees a need to purchase more land than is needed.

Bumgarner said the district needs 2 acres to build a station, but he does not know down the road what all the district's needs will be in 10 years, and how much growth could occur. It would not be a bad idea for future investment purposes, he said.

Lance said it would be preferable to have the option of additional acreage to use if needed for expansion or retain at a bargain price for future investment, knowing that land will be in short supply even though a future sale might be unknown.

Estes said he has mixed feelings about purchasing additional acreage looking for an increase in value over time, and it raises red flags to borrow money if the district cannot write a check and pay cash for the land.

Kelly said he would rather keep interest and expenses down, knowing the district is building a \$15 million station and plans to build a training center. He said the district should use funds to ensure Station 3 gets what it needs and focus on getting two things right rather than jeopardizing the district by going into further debt.

Hildebrandt said thinking long-term he agreed with Lance's position and said almost all land is spoken for and having options is desirable as opposed to having options pushed upon the district because of inaction. He is sensitive to the finances and not borrowing, but knowing projects can be moved around, he favors purchasing 4 acres, with the likelihood that 2 acres would be snatched up

quickly if the district has financial problems in the future, and probably for a profit.

Kelly said it is taxpayer dollars, and he is not comfortable with all the moving parts and projects the district has going on, and solid cost estimates on the projects have not yet been determined. He would need further estimates for all the projects before deciding.

Bumgarner said the chief suggested the district could borrow \$1.1 million (plus interest) for one year and pay off the loan next year. The Station 2 model will not commence until late 2024, and it is budgeted for \$2.3 million. The district could divert those funds because the project will not get close to the allocated amount this year.

Kelly said the district will still have to finance a "heck of a chunk" out of the \$15 million needed for Station 3. The district could get into a bind if financing is 8% on the loan for Station 3.

Tharnish agreed the 4-acre purchase was likely the best path but agreed it would be a reach financially. It is not a losing proposition, and there is some risk involved, but so far land is trending upward in value and the district could sell the additional 2 acres.

Estes said it is unknown how the market will fare with current interest rates, and commercial land is not moving quickly. He had heard commercial contractors were pulling out and the district could get stuck with a dead piece of property. He declined to decide either way on the acreage, but said it was an incredible piece of property.

Tharnish suggested the district request a first right of refusal on the additional 2 acres.

Lance said the district does not know the real commercial value of the property offered at a reduced cost by QuikTrip, and the owners could increase the price.

Estes said the first right to refusal price would be negotiated upfront when purchasing the first 2 acres.

Bumgarner said the district has been working on the right to purchase the land for about a year, and it is unknown what the accreditation process will point out, but at some point a station will be needed in the southwest corner of the district, and a station would not be built on the site for five years.

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Hildebrandt said the district had been looking to build a station in that area for about six years and he only sees calls increasing in that area with residential build-out and the growth in the commercial areas in the next several years. If there is a project that is not started, but funded in 2024, there is money to utilize for other projects.

Bumgarner said the additional acreage could house a repair shop and/or a logistic facility if the district does not build those facilities on the 14 acres at Station 1. If that happens, the additional 2 acres in the southern part of the district would not be needed. Ideally a repair shop would be placed in an industrial commercial area with easy access for trucks.

Kelly said three directors appear to be on board and he would be interested to know more about first right to refusal and the opinions of the absent directors.

Chief's report

Coyle said the following:

- The official swearing of Lt. Charles Ragland took place on Feb. 9.
- The district is actively recruiting for the fire technician position.
- The district's ambulance transports totaled 134 for February. Those included three AMR requests for service, six requests to BFFRPD, one to Douglas County, two to the Air Force Academy (AFA), and two to Palmer Lake. EMR calls in a year-to-date comparison in 2023-24 went up by a total of 46 incidents.
- The district sent a Type 6 Engine on Feb. 25 to assist the AFA with the 168-acre fire on the southwest side of the property northwest of the base power plant.
- All portable radio and mobile radios were programmed for the new command channels. The new channels were useful during the AFA wildland fire.

- The district also assisted Larkspur Fire Department on Feb. 23 with the Wiens Fire that burned 150 acres of wildland near Perry Park. Fire season is year-round and can occur even when snow is on the ground, but the snow helped keep that fire in check.
- The district completed 1,010 training hours during February.
- After a long delay due to supply chain issues, the district received a new side-by-side/utility terrain vehicle. The vehicle will be used for moving patients around during events such as the Fourth of July parade, in rough terrain rescues, and in snow event rescues. The vehicle is equipped with treads and tires to alternate for year-round rescues.

Forest fuel burn

Bradley said the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) is planning a controlled burn in the areas

that were machine-mitigated over the past two years in the Mount Herman Road area. The USFS is keeping the district informed and is planning a three-day back-to-back controlled burn in May or June, depending on fuels moisture and weather conditions. A USFS team will provide a campaign to educate the public. The USFS has requested backup from the district during those days, and it plans to burn about 200 acres per day. The USFS plans to continue controlled burns into the future.

Proposed training center informational meeting

Coyle said staff met with a resident living south of Station 1 to discuss concerns about the proposed training center site development. A proposed training center informational meeting will be held on April 18 at 6:30 p.m. at Station 1, 18650 Highway 105 or virtually via Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6714043850?omn=86004342465> meeting ID

671404 3850. Site developer Chris Purdue and board members will be in attendance to answer questions.

Bumgarner said the district is working on the preliminary site plan, the drainage, core sampling, and a noise study, and anticipates all the data being available at the informational meeting. No action will be taken by the board at the meeting, but public comments and concerns will be welcome, he said.

The meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m. on March 27.

Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday of the month. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 24 at 6:30 p.m. at Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. For Zoom meeting instructions, agendas, minutes, and updates, visit www.monumentfire.org or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

Natalie Barszcz can be reached at nataliebarszcz@ocn.me.

Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District, March 20

District to provide clarity

By Janet Sellers

Note: this reporter attended via an online Zoom meeting. This article was based on the agenda available online at www.BFFire.org, her notes from the meeting, and notes from BFFRPD secretary Donna Arkowski. Some details from the meeting were unavailable to this reporter at this writing.

Black Forest fire district reaches full capacity for budget estimations

The Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD) appears to have reached full capacity considering budget estimations and configuration of facilities. This provides staff the opportunity to focus on solidifying processes, structure, procedures, asset management, and long-range planning. Therefore, staff has reorganized to emphasize the roles, responsibilities, and accountability for each section, branch, division, group, unit, and team. The monthly department report reflects these changes providing simple, clear, and concise information regarding projects and data while eliminating areas that have "nothing to report."

District to provide clarity

Board Chair Nate Dowden noted that Chief PJ Lang-

maid has been chief since June 2020. Dowden questioned if the board had been clear in their expectations with respect to Langmaid's performance. Dowden stated he has not been clear and direct regarding expectations and wishes to provide clarity and boundaries for rules of engagement and performance to promote the chief's ability to succeed. An annual evaluation of the chief has not been provided previously by the board, but this will be done in the future.

The goal for this segment of the board meeting was to clarify which subjects do or do not require board consultation before the chief proceeds with actions. Some examples given were staffing agreements with other departments, development of a fire academy, and the presentation of outside communications to the board.

Board members' responsibility

All board personnel were given large three-ring binders that contained district policies with approvals pending and documents pertinent to the administration of district business and operations.

The board's responsibility to the district extends beyond financial oversight and includes objectives such

as whether the board wants the department to be an elite force or to focus on a capable force that performs well. Expressing concern about the designation of an elite force, Dowden stated each firefighter is highly qualified and experienced. Whether the district firefighters are more elite than city fire departments was discussed. The word "elite" was questioned as a possible hyperbole.

Treasurer Jack Hinton referred to proposal policies in the binder noting specific language in some and his recommendations on some financial policies and questioned processes surrounding others. Attorney Linda Glesne has reviewed all proposed policies. Also reviewing the proposed policies, the directors expressed concerns that there may be ambiguities between policies and questions of content versus intent.

Treasurer Hinton reported that the district has assets of \$1.78 million and \$2.66 million in total assets. The previous month's revenues were ambulance receipts of \$7,785 and tax revenues of \$53,936 with notable expenditures of worker's compensation, restocked uniform items, and reported monthly hours worked of 8,291.7 hours.

District mechanic Gavin Smith traveled to Florida for final inspection of a tender, and among a few items noted was a \$3,000 change fee due to extra painting required for the tender in Colorado, which will be paid for on delivery.

Strategic summary by Langmaid

Langmaid laid out his primary focus and intent:

- Leadership development and alignment for the entire organization.
- Development of management structure and processes to improve efficiency and succession planning.
- Succession planning and development for continuity of operations and service delivery.
- Strategic planning and alignment for organizational sustainability and stability.
- Building and maintaining relationships with strategic and tactical partners.

Despite the significant daily operational workload, the leadership within the organization is consistently focused on strategic planning for the next five, 10, and 20 years of professional and high-performing service delivery.

Emry to assume the sec-

tion lead for finance and administration

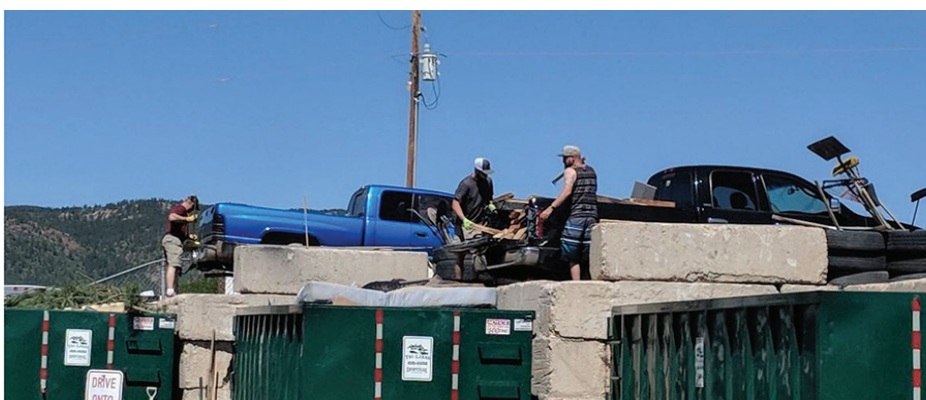
The reorganization timing was predicated on the leadership team's desire to begin developing more detailed long-range plans, detailed asset management plans, and the departure of Director of Public Relations Brooke Reid. The departure of the director allowed the district to bring on a very experienced paralegal from the District Attorney's Office. Lisa Emry was with the office for 10-plus years, allowing her to now assume the section lead for finance and administration. This change now allows for Administrator Rachel Dunn to focus on logistics and planning. Dunn's wildland background has been and continues to be in logistics and she has now assumed the responsibilities of being the section lead for asset management plans, long-range planning, and the daily logistics of the district.

Meetings are usually held on the third Wednesday of the month at Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. Meetings are open to the public in person or via Zoom. The next regular meeting is scheduled for April 17 at 7 p.m. For joining instructions, updates, agendas, minutes, and reports, visit <http://bffire.org> or contact the director of Public Relations at Admin@bffire.org or call 719-495-4300. Janet Sellers may be reached at JanetSellers@ocn.me.



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Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO), March 9

Council of Governments preparing wildfire protection plan

By Marlene Brown

The Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO) held its bi-monthly meeting March 9. NEPCO's purpose is to serve and be a point of contact between local government and agencies regarding land use matters that impact member associations and their residents. NEPCO is a nonprofit corporation formed in June 2000. Bob Swedenburg, vice president, is a founding member of NEPCO with continued service since its inception. Mike Aspenson, president, called the meeting to order. NEPCO has 51 Homeowners Associations (HOAs); there were 21 HOAs present, short of a quorum.

Several board members gave their reports. Wildfire/Preparedness Committee Chair Beth Lonnquist spoke to remind those present that Monument Fire District (MFD) opened registration on March 26 for free chipping days for HOAs in the area. MFD will send two firefighters and a

chipping truck. HOAs will need 10-12 people working together to prepare the slash and tree limbs for the chipper, then on chipping day to help load the hopper with the debris. To sign up your HOA and more information about fire mitigation, go to www.monumentfire.org

Guest speakers Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) Director Andy Gunning explained that it is a council of 16 jurisdictions covering El Paso, Teller, and Park Counties. It is preparing a wildfire protection plan between Monument and Palmer Lake with a grant from the federal government.

PPACG also funnels funds from federal and state money to military planning programs, the Council on Aging, metro planning, and long-range transportation, air and water quality control. See www.ppacg.org.

Jared Verner, policy and communications legislative advocate, explained that PPACG continues to

promote local control and opposes state-directed unfunded mandates. The Legislative Affairs Committee tracks and reviews legislative bills and proposals. For 2024's 120-day legislative session, over 560 bills have been introduced. HOA members are welcome to the committee meetings www.ppacg.org/committees.

NEPCO meets every other month on the second Saturday. The next meeting is scheduled for May 11, 10-noon at the Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. The topic will be "Recent Colorado State Legislative Impacts on HOAs" with attorney Leonard Rieth and District 20 State Rep. Don Wilson, former Monument mayor. For more information, go to nepco.org.

Marlene Brown can be reached at marlenebrown@ocn.me.

Gleneagle Civic Association Board of Directors, Mar. 17

Discussion of management's role continues

By David Futey

On March 21, the Gleneagle Civic Association (GCA) Board of Directors held its bi-monthly meeting, which was the second meeting since the all-volunteer GCA board hired Warren Management Group (WMG) to assist with administration of the associated Gleneagle community. The GCA board members in attendance were President Gordon Streich, Vice President Shawna Uehling, Glen Leimbach, Mark Connell, and Glen Gutnayer. There were eight community members in attendance along with WMG representatives Joshua Gregory and Holly Finney. The meeting began at 5:30 p.m.

In February, WMG emailed a document to GCA members and posted it to the GCA portal on the WMG website (portal.warrenmgmt.com). The document outlined WMG duties and services provided to the GCA board and community. These duties include certain homeowners' communications; management services such as advising the Board of Directors who retain decision-making responsibility and serving as a liaison with legal counsel when legal action occurs; in-house accounting services such as tracking homeowners' account balances and delinquencies, tracking insurance status, renewals, and claims, preparing meeting agendas and recording minutes, and tracking Architectural Control Committee submissions and approved modifications.

According to the document, WMG does not currently perform event attendance, governance inspection, violation letters, or management of the Rae Berg Open Space. In general, WMG can perform most duties except for those related to governance compliance, though part of the meeting discussed reviewing this option in the future.

The board reviewed and approved the 2023 year-end financials and reviewed the income and expense reports for January and February. Streich reported the GCA came in under budget for 2023.

WMG has an hourly based contract for the transition period and beginning of the relationship with GCA as requested by the GCA board. Streich stated the costs are within the GCA operational budget. He said the initial startup costs of the relationship were understandably high but had become more in line with what was expected as the relationship has become more defined.

Gregory suggested that the board withhold public discussion regarding specific residents who are delinquent in their assessment payments until the executive session following this meeting. During the Manager's Report, Gregory stated 117 homeowners had not paid their assessment. This includes 74 that had not paid for 2023 and 49 who had not paid for multiple years. This equates to over \$8,000 in uncollected assessments.

Gregory also requested an inventory of association assets, current contract information with Fast Track Construction, and term expirations for present GCA board members. He also said the transition to the WMG portal has been completed. Gregory said three new homeowners joined the association since December 2023.

When a home sale occurs, WMG is usually contacted by the prospective buyer through the title company who requests a Homeowners Association (HOA) status letter and occasionally an HOA compliance inspection and letter. The status letter provides information on the administrative history of the home and its standing within the association, such as whether HOA assessments had been paid and whether there were outstanding HOA violations. The compliance inspection requires a WMG representative to perform an inspection of the home to determine if it complies with the GCA governing documents. WMG is paid by the buyer, usually through the closing costs of the home sale, for providing the status letter and compliance inspection and subsequent letter. At this time, WMG cannot perform any governance (inspections and notifications) as outlined in the GCA governing documents. Funds received through GCA assess-

ments cannot be used for governance inspections unless the GCA governing documents are changed, requiring a two-thirds vote from the membership to change it.

During the Roads, Signs and Ditches Committee report, Connell stated that the street sign on Pauma Valley that was damaged during the recent snowstorm is being repaired. He has spoken with a homeowner on Rangely Drive about removing vegetation that is obstructing a street sign. A request has been made to the El Paso County Department of Public Works to install crossing markers with possibly flashing signs where trails from the Rae Berg Open Space cross over streets including Gleneagle Drive, Pauma Valley Drive, and Doral Way.

A discussion about the submission process occurred during the Architectural Control Committee portion of the meeting. Submissions are currently performed through the GCA website and two GCA board members review the request, providing a decision to the homeowner. It was discussed what the process might be if WMG assumed this role and the possible associated fee for WMG to conduct the inspection and subsequent documentation. This was tabled for future discussion.

During the Covenant Control Committee portion, it was stated that WMG cannot provide governance enforcement given the present stipulation in the governing documents that assessment payments cannot be used to pay for governance enforcement. Presently, it requires a GCA board member to identify a violation and the GCA board to then send out the first notice by certified mail as required by Colorado Common Interest Ownership Act (CCIOA) and House Bill 1137. There was a discussion about having WMG perform the administration of sending the non-compliance notice(s) to the homeowner but that was tabled given the need for legal review of the governing documents to determine if this is allowable.

Connell suggested a one-year pilot program to use non-assessment funds from a land sale that totaled \$60,000 to have WMG perform the entire covenant review process, from performing neighborhood inspections to sending out the notices and seeking compliance. A question was raised about whether those funds could be used depending on whether assessment payments were used in the original purchase of the land. Streich stated

his concern that the relationship between WMG and GCA is still in its early stages and wants to ensure the original intent is being met before making changes to the relationship. This was tabled for future discussion.

New and other business

The annual GCA garage sale was approved for June 7 and 8.

The board unanimously approved the renewal of the Owners Insurance that provides umbrella insurance including liability coverage. There was an 8% increase. Worker's compensation insurance is provided by Pinnacol Insurance. Streich said the GCA is fortunate to have insurance as it has become more difficult for HOAs to acquire and retain it.

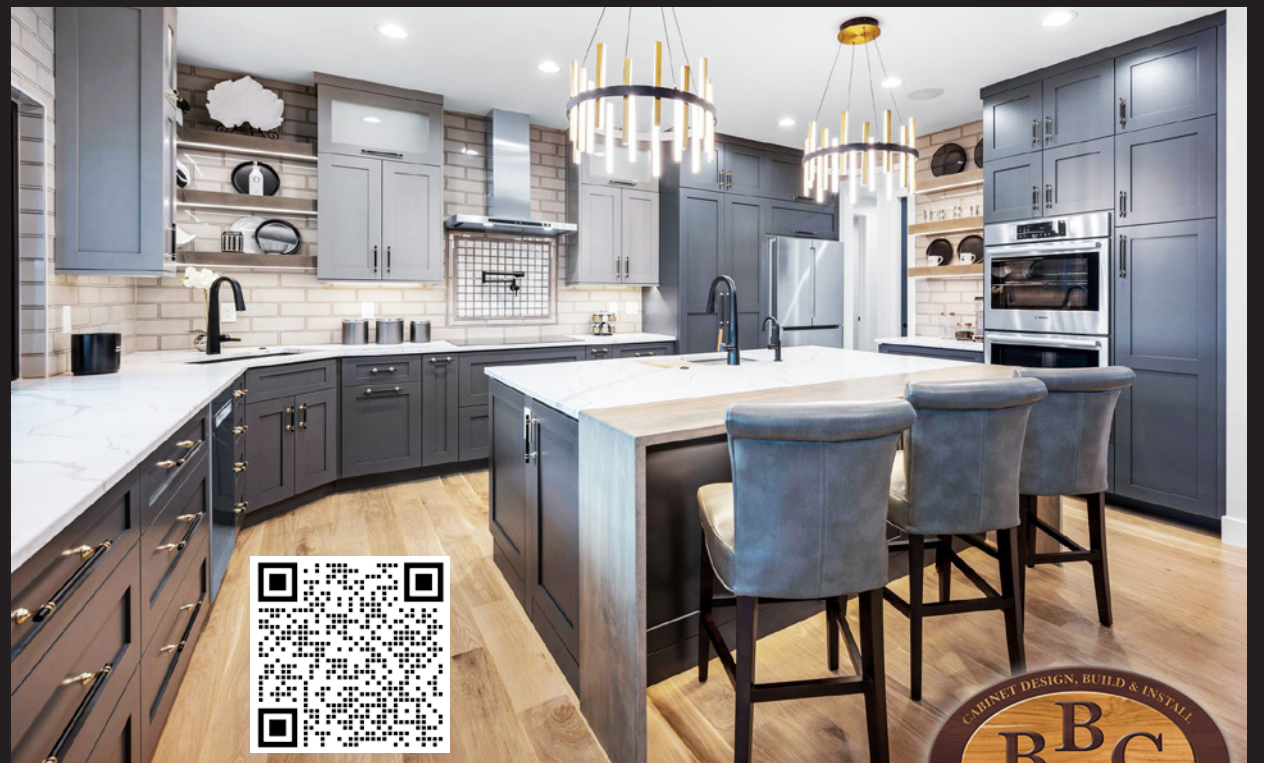
A discussion occurred regarding renewing the contract with Fast Track Construction that presently provides mowing and weeding of the common areas and islands. The board tabled approving a renewal of the contract until information regarding the company's insurance coverage was obtained and discussed with the company.

Gregory provided a draft of the assessment notice letter. A statement balance letter will accompany the notice. The board approved a change in payment date to April 30 and no credit card option due to the excessive fee.

Members raised the following items during the GCA member comment portion of the meeting:

- It was stated that there has been a lack of communication with the community regarding GCA board meetings and information regarding the relationship with WMG. The WMG portal and GCA website were noted as locations where community members should seek information. It was stated that the board only technically needs to inform residents of the annual GCA member meeting date.
- A request was made to contact the county about completely resurfacing River Oaks Drive. It has been patched numerous times as it is in near continual need of pothole repair. It was suggested that residents use the El Paso County Citizen Connect site (citizenconnect.elpasoco.com) to submit pothole repair requests.
- A request was made for the board to consider adding benches in the Rae Berg Open Space

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area. This has been previously discussed by the board along with related cost for concrete pad and needs for the bench placement.

- A member initiated a discussion regarding the number of garbage collection companies and the various days they perform their service. It was suggested that the association consider contracting with one provider. A discussion

ensued regarding the practicality of this suggestion with concerns raised about the selection process and collection of fees, among other items.

- It was requested that the board contact the Gleneagle North HOA (GNHOA) about its annual paper shredding event to determine if GCA members can participate. The event

usually occurs at Antelope Trails Elementary School. Streich said he would contact the GNHOA president about it.

The general meeting ended at 7:37 p.m. The board then went into executive session.

David Futey can be contacted at davidfutey@ocn.me.

Woodmoor Improvement Association, Feb. 28 and March 27

Tri-Lakes Women's Club donates defibrillator

By Jackie Burhans

The Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) board met on Feb. 28 after the deadline for the March edition of OCN. At that meeting, the board heard about plans to increase safety at Toboggan Hill along with other director reports.

At the March 27 WIA board meeting, representatives from the Tri-Lakes Women's Club (TLWC) gave an automated external defibrillator (AED) to the board. The board also heard concerns from a resident on the placement of a shed on a neighboring property.

Automated external defibrillator given to WIA

Carol Costakis, Jan McKinley, and Sue Leggiero from the Tri-Lakes Women's Club told about their organization which has existed for over 50 years with a mission to do community service, grant making, and provide educational opportunities for its members and the community. TLWC has given out over \$1 million in grants to nonprofit organizations, schools, and public service agencies. Most recently they have hosted cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) classes. This was motivated by a personal experience where a member's 37-year-old daughter-in-law collapsed and because of the fast work of people who knew CPR and had access to an AED saved her life.

TLWC decided it would offer classes and have trained over 75 members and their spouses in conjunction with Monument Fire District and UC Health. Costakis, McKinley and Leggiero noticed that The Barn did not have an AED and McKinley suggested that TLWC offer one to WIA, which approved the donation. TLWC does a lot of events at The Barn and feels it would be a great way to say thank you to WIA for having them and to give as a gift to the community.

Board President Brian Bush and Woodmoor Public Safety Chief Kevin Nielsen accepted the AED and its case, thanking the TLWC, noting that there are many events at The Barn that would benefit from this donation. McKinley suggested WIA notify the Monument Fire Department so that The Barn is listed as a location with an AED.

Toboggan Hill safety improvements

Noting that Toboggan Hill is a popular recreational



Above: Members of Tri-Lakes Women's Club (TLWC) presented an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and case to members of the Woodmoor Improvement Association Board of Directors on March 28. TLWC purchased the device to be placed in the Woodmoor Barn to be available to the many groups and individuals who use the building. TLWC recently held a CPR and AED training session for its members at the Barn and recognized the importance of having an AED in this location. From left are, TLWC board member Jan McKinley, WIA President Brian Bush, Kevin Nielsen, chief, Woodmoor Public Safety, and Carol Costakis, TLWC member and organizer of the CPR and AED training. *Photo by Sue Leggiero.*

sledding hill used by residents and others, Bush said the board decided to take some measures to increase safety. Caution signs have been placed on the hill, trees have been removed and orange fencing has been placed to block certain areas. The goal, he said, is to help sleds avoid contact with solid objects.

Resident concerns

Resident Jennifer Davis brought up two items that have been addressed by the Architectural Control Committee, but she wanted to make sure were brought to the attention of the board. First, she noted that a neighbor had been approved to build a shed, but Davis felt it was placed in an existing easement and wanted to have it addressed so it would not create a precedent. Davis also said that a neighbor had been doing a major house remodel for over a year and it was causing parking problems and tearing up a common area. She noted that the neighbor had been granted waivers to allow construction equipment on a trail without notification

to nearby residents, and with extensions to their timeline.

Bush said the suggestion to notify affected neighbors when WIA grants a variance was very reasonable. He also noted that WIA has a restoration agreement that any damage will be rectified. He suggested Davis or her neighbors could call WPS for help with parking issues. As to the shed being in an easement, Bush said he isn't certain that she is correct, but that he also didn't think it was reasonable to ask someone to move a shed that had been approved for over a year by WIA. Bush said he would confirm the situation and let her know the result and what steps the board decides to take.

Board highlights

- Board member Steve Cutler announced that WIA staff received a noxious weed spraying grant which is needed primarily at the South Woodmoor Preserve common area. WIA is working with adjacent neighbors to ensure they also address noxious weeds.
- Board member Cindy Thrush noted that chipping days have been set for June 29-30 and July 27-28 at Lewis-Palmer High School. Chipping is free to residents and open to non-residents for a nominal fee.
- Bush reported that WIA would gather information from its sub-HOAs on dues and insurance status and bring it back so the board would have that information.
- Nielsen said that he has heard no reports of bears but it is spring and residents should keep trash cans, barbecue grills, and pet food inside a closed garage.

The WIA Board of Directors usually meets at 7 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month in the Barn at 1691 Woodmoor Drive, Monument. The next meeting will be on April 24.

The WIA calendar can be found at www.woodmoor.org/wia-calendar/. WIA board meeting minutes can be found at www.woodmoor.org/meeting-minutes/ once approved and posted.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

March Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

March this year had its usual swings between winter and spring and was of course punctuated by a major snowstorm during the middle of the month. Temperatures were a little below average overall, but there were no real cold or warm periods. Precipitation and snowfall were above average again, which is good news because moisture during this time of the year is critical for the start of the growing season. After a slow start to the snowfall this season, we have managed to put three months in a row of above normal snowfall, bringing our seasonal total to above average and we still have another month or so of good snowfall potential.

The month started off mild, with highs reaching the upper 50s to low 60s, about 15-20 degrees warmer than normal for the start of March. This was interrupted by a quick-moving cold front that brought a dusting of snow and cooler temperatures on the 3rd and 4th. After a couple of dry days, another cold front moved in bringing a couple days of unsettled conditions. This produced a couple inches of snowfall along with a few rumbles of thunder on the 8th. This was our first sign of the changing seasons as we begin to see more convective activity in the atmosphere.

Quiet and mild conditions then moved back in over the next several days as the atmosphere began to build up moisture and energy ahead of an anomalously strong and unsettled pattern that would bring significant impacts to the region during the second week of the month.

This next storm was a combination of several unusual factors that normally don't all come together at once over our region. First was a cold upper-level area of low pressure moving out of the Pacific Northwest and dropping south along the Intermountain West. At the same time, low-level wind fields began to draw in moisture from the southeast out of the Gulf of Mexico. And finally, a cold front began to slide down the Front Range of the Rockies. This combination of factors set the stage for a widespread, heavy snow event across the region.

The area of upper-level low pressure cut off from the main flows sat over northern Arizona/Southern Utah for several days, sending several waves of energy over the region to help enhance lift. This made very efficient work of the moisture that moved in from the Gulf of Mexico, and cold air ensured snow for the Palmer Divide. The first signs of the storm began during the late afternoon of the 13th, with scattered snow showers. Snow began to fall heavily later that evening, with several inches accumulating

before midnight. Temperatures continued to cool as well, and winds kicked in. This produced heavy snow and strong winds, with blizzard conditions through the night and into the next morning. Snowfall accumulated at rates of 2-3 inches per hour at times, with over a foot by the time the sun came up on the 14th.

Snow continued through the day and into the night, with another 8-12 inches accumulating before midnight. The storm finally began to wind down the next morning, leaving behind a winter wonderland. Around the Palmer Divide, anywhere from 20-30 inches of snow accumulated, causing travel issues and some fallen trees. But we didn't get the worst of it. In the foothills, 40-60 inches accumulated, making this the largest snowfall since our infamous March 2003 storm. See the photo on page 24.

Of course, the good news with this storm was the beneficial moisture that it left behind, with 2-3 inches of liquid equivalent that slowly melted into the soil over the next couple weeks.

Mostly sunny conditions and quiet weather moved back in from the 16th through the 23rd, and the strong March sun angle began the process of melting the snow a few inches each day. By the time the last storm of the month moved in on the 24th, most of the snowfall from the previous event had melted away. The exceptions were the large drifts and piles in the shaded and forested regions. This final storm was colder than previous storms and produced more wind and blowing snow, but because it was colder it did not have as much moisture to work with. Therefore, only 2-6 inches of new snow fell throughout the region on the 24th and 25th.

Once again, the springtime atmosphere was unstable as well, producing some thundersnow and graupel during the afternoon of the 24th. This was further evidenced by the convective snow showers that developed during the afternoon of the 26th behind the departing storm, very reminiscent of sum-

mer thunderstorms developing over the mountains and moving off the Front Range and over the Palmer Divide, only this time of the year they produce snow instead of rain.

After this last storm departed, mild air and quiet conditions again returned. The month ended with temperatures moving from the 40s to the upper 50s and low 60s along with gusty winds at times.

A look ahead

April is known for a wide range of weather conditions in the region and is on average our snowiest month of the year. We can see 70° temperatures one afternoon and blizzard conditions the next. Several recent years have seen over 50 inches of snow accumulate during the month. Of course, it also melts very quickly, often adding beneficial moisture to the soil and helping the vegetation, which is just getting started.

March 2024 Weather Statistics

Average High	47.6° (-4.4°)
100-year return frequency value max	57.9° min 38.0°
Average Low	23.0° (+1.4°)
100-year return frequency value max	27.0° min 12.0°
Highest Temperature	60° on the 2nd
Lowest Temperature	8° on the 28th
Monthly Precipitation	2.35"
	(+0.75", 32% above normal)
100-year return frequency value max	4.29" min 0.22"
Monthly Snowfall	37.9"
	(+17.6", 47% above normal)
Season to Date Snow	127.4"
	(+36.6", 29% above normal)
	(the snow season is from July 1 to June 30)
Season to Date Precip.	5.39"
	(+2.15", 40% above normal)
	(the precip season is from Oct 1 to Sept 30)
Heating Degree Days	922(+9)
Cooling Degree Days	0
Bill Kappel is a meteorologist and Tri-Lakes resident. He can be reached at billkappel@ocn.me .	

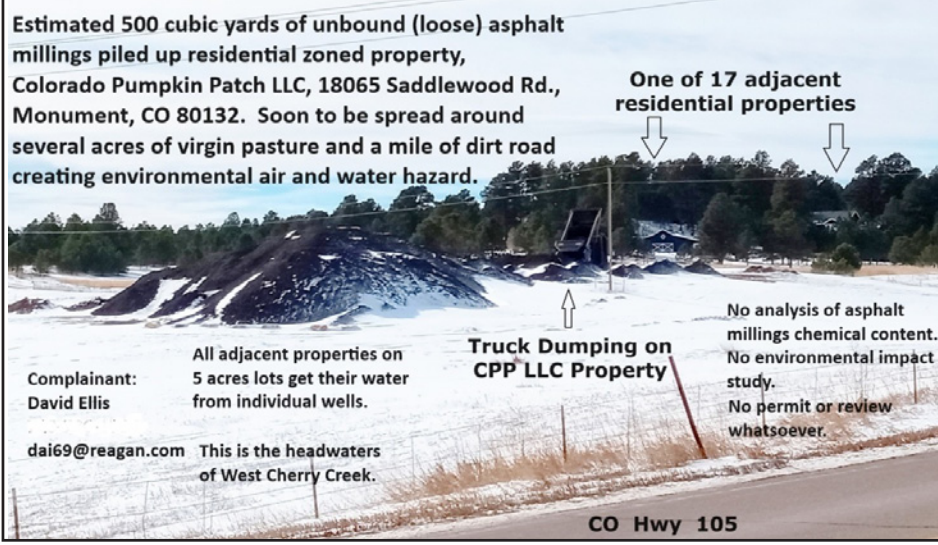
Letters to Our Community

Guidelines for letters are on page 23.

Disclaimer: The information and opinions expressed in LetterstoOurCommunityaretheresponsibilityoftheletter writers and should not be interpreted as the views of OCN even if the letter writer is an OCN volunteer. The letters are arranged in alphabetical order based on the last name of the author.

Environmental disaster looming at Colorado Pumpkin Patch?

An estimated 500 cubic yards of finely ground asphalt millings from the surface of public roads are piled up at the Colorado Pumpkin Patch LLC property on 40 acres of residential-zoned land next to Highway 105 west of Highway 83. These asphalt granules contain cancer-causing polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons



Above: Graphic provided by Dave Ellis.

Fox Run Park, with a tower and canopy walk, event room, and a 60-car parking area, will destroy the very qualities that make this small, forested park so special. A news release on the website even says the structure is envisioned as a hub for tourism. The county claims to have done public outreach but made zero effort to include locals who are most directly impacted. If you study the reports on its website, it is obvious that it began with this goal and worked backward to justify it; all decisions were made privately by park and nature center staff/volunteers and its hired design/architecture team.

The feasibility study doesn't even consider any environmental or wildlife impacts, and the traffic study incredibly claims that there will be no impact on surrounding neighborhoods. All its "public meetings" are just fundraisers, like the one in March at a brewery; a meeting was hurriedly called in February because of local residents' complaints at having this sprung on us with zero notice or input, but it was clear they had no interest in actually addressing any of our concerns and intended to proceed with this project. Once again, the county commissioners and agencies refuse to listen to citizens who disagree with their zeal to develop all of our increasingly scarce natural resources. If you agree that funding would be better spent on fixing the ponds/gazebo area and existing trails, and that this park should be protected, not developed, please let the county know about your concerns by contacting your county commissioner and parks@elpasoco.com. Michelle Satterlee

Little Log Church celebrates 100 years

For 100 years, the Little Log Church has stood in Palmer Lake. It is a humble, log structure that has survived various congregations and generations. It has been embraced and loved by many, ignored by some, and disliked by others. Regardless of the community's feelings about the church, it continues to stand firmly here.

What purpose does Little Log Church have? Well, its purpose is to show God's faithfulness to all who live here—to assure broken, weary, sinful, defeated, seekers of God that God has a presence here. God's glory is clearly displayed in the beautiful surroundings, but He is also in the people who seek Him here. We are grateful for the community of people at Little Log Church and for those in our wider community of churches who acknowledge that God has a future and hope for us.

Little Log Church is more than just a historical site celebrating its longevity. It is evidence that God continues to show His mercy and protection in Palmer Lake. The people of Little Log Church are not perfect in carrying out God's purpose. We are simply a group of broken and sinful pilgrims who seek God's truth, mercy, and guidance for our own journey, for this town, and for this world. We are evidence that God doesn't leave us to our own understanding but is faithfully here for generations to light our way and guide us through every season. We love and pray for the people of this town and welcome anyone to seek God's truth and way alongside us. We are grateful to be a part of Palmer Lake. Delinda Story

(PAHs) and likely heavy metals as well as accumulated tire and vehicle brake wear residue and engine exhaust artifacts from years of road use. The asphalt paving industry recycles almost all asphalt millings into new hot rolled asphalt which seals in the contaminants. Unbound (loose) asphalt millings have an incredibly high total surface area through which rain and snow melt percolates, leaching contaminants into the aquifer below. The Pumpkin Patch is surrounded by residences which obtain drinking water from their private wells.

El Paso County stipulated these asphalt millings are to be spread over acres of virgin pastureland on which hundreds of Pumpkin Patch client vehicles park as well as over one mile of the Patch's interior dirt roads. This spreading of the asphalt millings, which the county specifies must be done by April 15, 2024, will only accelerate the leaching of contaminants which are ground

down to dust size particles by vehicle traffic.

Enlightened jurisdictions strictly prohibit the use of loose asphalt millings as a roadway surface due to its recognized hazards to human health and the environment. Without a paved top surface, its small particles will leach contaminants as well as migrate through the actions of water, wind, and physical displacement. The El Paso County Environmental Health office, in its apparent environmental ignorance, incredibly responded to my complaints in this matter by saying, "No disturbance of the land is taking place." Dave Ellis

Protect Fox Run Park from development

The El Paso County Parks and Recreation Department's decision to construct a multi-million-dollar nature center facility in a remote section of

Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

Poetry month

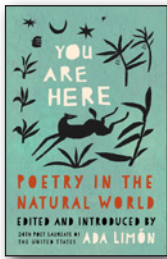
By the staff at Covered Treasures

"Poetry is language at its most distilled and most powerful."—Rita Dove

April is National Poetry Month! Reading poetry can engage all the senses and is one reason many children's picture books are written in poetry form. This month we feature poetry for all ages, written by nationally known authors as well as some talented local poets.

You Are Here; Poetry in the Natural World
Ada Limon, Editor (Milkweed Editions) \$25

This sparkling curated collection was edited by Ada Limón, the 24th U.S. poet laureate. It is in honor of the natural world and all it means to be humans living within it. The poems selected for inclusion can be appreciated by experienced poetry lovers as well as by those who are just beginning to learn to appreciate the art of poetry.



Coffee Cup Tales & Old Car Nuts
By Lon Wartman \$16
The witty, truthful, and sometimes outrageous poems in this book came about through Wartman's involvement

with Tri-Lakes Cruisers Car Club. The Cruisers meet once a week at the Coffee Cup Café and the stories flow. The group is full of men and women from all walks of life who share a deep love of old vehicles, dreams of yesteryears, and backseat blues. Come along for the ride.

The Divine Book of Love
Mary Burnett Brown (Heartfelt Poetry LLC) \$10
Brown's poetry is a key that opens your heart to deep spiritual wisdom. Through her poetry, you will find peace and happiness. Her poems encourage you to pause for a moment and embrace all the beauty and love that are present in this world.

Having Lived
By Joseph Murphy (Kelsay Books) \$13
This is a wonderful collection of strong, authentic poems that range from moving elegies and lyric poems of homecoming and longing to personal histories retold as narratives full of irony. Common to all these works is a collection of shared sentiments from our times. Murphy's subtle grasp of our contemporary lives will have a wide audience appeal.

Red Sings from Treetops; A Year in Colors
By Joyce Sidman; illustrated by Pamela Zagarenski (Clarion Books) \$19

Color comes alive in this whimsical, innovative picture book: blue dances on summer lakes, green drips from spring leaves, black wafts mysteriously through autumn evenings. Together an award-winning poet and a brilliant artist inspire us to look closer at the thrilling colors of the seasons. This book invites readers to notice colors and correlate emotion.

Devotions: The Selected Poems of Mary Oliver
By Mary Oliver (Penguin Books) \$20
Carefully curated, these 200-plus poems feature Oliver's work from her very first book of poetry, No Voyage and Other Poems, published in 1963 at the age of 28, through her most recent collection, Felicity, published in 2015. This timeless volume, arranged by Oliver, showcases the beloved poet at her edifying best. Within these pages, she provides us with an extraordinary and invaluable collection of her passionate, perceptive, and much-treasured observations of the natural world.

Tiny, Perfect Things
By M. H. Clark (Compendium Publishing) \$18
The whole world is a treasure waiting to be found. Open your eyes and see the wonderful things all around. This is the story of a child and a grandfather whose walk around the neighborhood leads to a day of shared wonder as they

discover all sorts of tiny, perfect things together. With rhythmic storytelling and detailed and intricate illustrations, this is a book about how childlike curiosity can transform ordinary days into extraordinary adventures.

I Knew You Could Do It!
By Nancy Tillman (Feiwel & Friends) \$18
This picture book is a celebration of everyday accomplishments as well as life's milestones. It applauds anyone who has overcome hurdles and challenges, and cheers them into the future. It's for anyone who needs an infusion of support and reassurance. The book is full of bright, wonderful illustrations that make you believe in the magic that cheers you on.

Conversations with Flowers
By Valerie Shereck (Austin Macauley Publishers) \$8
This little poetry book is a tapestry where the author weaves reflections on nature, the sting of loss, the intricacies of relationships, and the myriad hues of life. These poems not only celebrate the rejuvenating power of faith but also resonate and linger long after the last word is read.

Until next month, happy reading.
The staff at Covered Treasures can be reached at books@ocn.me.

April Library Events

National Library Week; newly extended hours in Monument

By Harriet Halbig
The week of April 8 is National Library Week. In commemoration, the Monument Library will hold an open house on Tuesday, April 9, from 6 to 8 p.m. Enjoy dessert platters from Lolly's Ice Cream, a program of Irish dancers from Rose Courtney Academy of Irish Dance

at 7 p.m., and a scavenger hunt with a prize of a family fun pack from Dave and Buster's.

There will be a planetarium-themed escape room for teens on April 16 from 5 to 6 p.m. The program, Back to the Planetarium, is open to ages 12 to 18. Registration is required. Please go

to the library website ppld.org and then programs by location. Or call 719-531-6333 extension 7005.

The tween Dungeons and Dragons Club, for ages 9 to 12, will meet on May 4 from 4 to 5:30. No experience is required and new members are welcome. Registration is required at 719-

531-6333 extension 7005.
Please note that the Monument Library is now open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Thursdays.

We hope to see you at our open house!
Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me.

Palmer Lake Historical Society, Mar. 21

Presentation on Monument Cemetery

By Marlene Brown
The Palmer Lake Historical Society (PLHS) March meeting began with introduction of 2024 President Jennine Engel, a longtime resident whose family is from Palmer Lake. Then Doug Lange, treasurer, presented a \$500 check on behalf of PLHS to Sue Cook as a grant to the PLHS Valley Cemetery. It is another pioneer cemetery located off County Line Road in Douglas County.

The next presentation was a charcoal drawing of Catherine McShane, wife of David McShane, one of the first

homesteaders in 1865 in the Town of Palmer Lake. There has been a charcoal drawing of David McShane hanging in Lucretia Vaille Museum, but recently the picture of Catherine was found in the frame and hidden behind David's picture. What a surprise!

The March program The Monument Cemetery was presented by John Howe and Michael Weinfeld. Howe is a member of the board for Our Community News and a former member of the Monument Board of Trustees. He has worked on many volunteer proj-

ects around town. He has worked on the cemetery project for 14 of the 18 years that he has lived in Monument, working tirelessly to find the names on plots and tombstones and identify where the information had gotten lost or misplaced. Weinfeld has worked on the project for the last six years alongside of Howe. He is one of the editors of Our Community News and was an Associated Press reporter in Washington, D.C., for 37 years.

On May 28, 1886, Charles Bissel sold 5 acres of land, where the cemetery

is located, to the Town of Monument for one dollar. There were many graves already in the cemetery, including the oldest grave, that of Alonzo Welty who died in 1860.

As many people had already been buried in the cemetery without markers or anyone knowing their names, many graves were marked "unknown." There was train wreck in 1909 near the town of Husted, which was between south of the North Gate of the Air Force Academy and Interquest Boulevard. Twelve people died and 60 were in-

jured in the accident. Many of the dead were buried as unknowns in the Monument Cemetery. As Howe pointed out, "They did not have ID's or Social Security cards or anything that would identify them."

In 2016, Boy Scout Kent Griffith heard that many of the unknown tombstones made of plaster of Paris were crumbling. To earn his Eagle Scout badge, he directed the installation of 128 unknown gravestones made of granite to replace the crumbling markers. The Town of Monument holds ceremonies on Memorial Day and Veterans Days to honor the veterans who are buried there.

As a side note, members of my family are pioneers of the area. Four great-grandparents, two grandparents, two parents, a great-great-grandmother, and several uncles of mine are buried in Monument Cemetery. We also have several pioneer relatives buried in Spring Valley.

Meetings are usually held on the third Thursday of the month at the Palmer Lake Town Hall, 42 Valley Crescent, Palmer Lake. The next meeting will be from 7 to 8 p.m. April 18 (doors open at 6:30 p.m.) The program will be History of the Pikes Peak Trolleys by John Haney. Haney is founder of the Pikes Peak Trolley and Restoration Shop. Open and free to the public.

For more information about future presentations and membership, go to palmerdividehistory.org.

Marlene Brown can be reached at marlenebrown@ocn.me.



Above: Monument Cemetery entrance at 800 Beacon Lite Rd. Photo by Michael Weinfeld.



Above: John Howe, left, and Michael Weinfeld. Photo by Tia Mayer.

On the Trail (in memory of Tim Watkins) Mount Herman "Leap"

By Steve Pate

Occasionally I saw the term, "grid day," mentioned by Randy Phillips on social media. I was not sure what this meant until I learned that Phillips intended to summit Mount Herman on Feb. 29 to complete his grid—summitting Mount Herman on every calendar day of the year. This meant that he had the chance to complete his "grid" only every four years when a Leap Year rolled around.

So, on Thursday, Feb. 29 (Leap

Day), Phillips and 24 supporters ascended Mount Herman via the Broken Ankle Trail and celebrated Phillips's completion of his goal on all 366 calendar days.

Steve Pate can be contacted at stevepate@ocn.me

Right: Group photo on Broken Ankle Trail to Mount Herman. Photo by Randy Phillips. See also the photo on page 1.



High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

Garden helps, bloopers, and dangers

By Janet Sellers

April for gardeners

April still gets lots of cold weather that can kill garden plants that don't have their organic systems at work. The organic garden has a natural pace for give-and-take with microorganisms that plants depend on for life. The microcosm of organic organisms survives cold weather dormancy but doesn't get going until the soil climate is right for activity at specific temperatures. Many use frost cloth for temperature and harsh weather protection into the summer season.

Music from nature

Last month, I shared that bird songs and classical music have a profound effect on plants. Human speech also plays a part. But overstimulation—especially from loud or strident music—is

harmful to the plant, also true for other living things like people and animals. Bird song sound frequencies can also have a calming effect on plants, reducing stress and improving their ability to cope with environmental factors such as temperature changes or pests.

Geysers concertos

An article in the Washington Post reported on a computer program coded by Domenico Vicinanza, a particle physicist and composer at Britain's Anglia Ruskin University, that converted geyser underground tremors into a musical score, and flutist Alyssa Schwartz performed a musical score generated by seismic readings recorded at Yellowstone's Mary Lake, Wyo.

I found out about music-like frequencies created in nature that humans cannot hear but birds, animals

and plants can. To explore that this spring, I got a midi device that puts plant frequencies into frequencies we can hear.

Not for the birds

Human hair can tangle on a bird's feet or legs, cutting off circulation. Avoid soft fluffy pet fur taken from the undercoat of a pet, or very fine fur like pet rabbit fur. These may soak up water - it's dangerous to nests - so compost these and enrich the soil with no harm to any creature. Any pet hair should be used only from pets that have not received flea or tick treatments.

Silver bullets?

Don't drink snow!

Colorado allows licensed cloud seeding of silver iodide for ski resorts and farming. If you try to burn a snowball and it turns black, that's silver iodide, (a

chemical regulated by the Clean Water Act as a hazardous substance) which is used across the globe and linked to various weather issues. Studies show concerns regarding bioaccumulation, citing pros and cons of this weather control strategy.

Local herbs

Our bodies are exposed to heavy metals every day via food, water, pharmaceuticals, manufactured products, pollution, and more. The National Institute for Health shares that we can use these to help detox from heavy metals. We can grow cilantro, cumin, dandelion, and milk thistle. Red clover and turmeric are good but not locally grown. Janet Sellers is a holistic gardening nature lover and welcomes your garden tips at JanetSellers@ocn.me

Art Matters

The most beautiful investment and tax deduction

By Janet Sellers

Art to buy, lease, or rent has its benefits

We can buy art, but we can also lease or rent artworks. Sculptures and artworks lend a powerful uplift to places, especially businesses. One primary source for art leasing is the artmakers themselves. Leasing allows the prospective buyer to get a feel for the art in the place, such as a corporate building or to give a special atmosphere to a property—visitors and tenants like to feel the luxury that art brings to a place.

Museums offer art rentals, and there are art rental agreements with art collectors as well, since rental and leasing income is another way that art

generates income while keeping ownership. Museums and private collectors are two ways to do this, and sometimes galleries will rent or lease artworks. Often, the temporary art rental may become a sale as well. Art dealers also allow a trial period to see if the art and collector have a good fit. This allows the renter to experience the art without the full commitment of purchasing it and benefits the artist because the artwork is out working in the world, generating income even before it is sold.

An asset class that is fun to own

As a store of wealth to grow capital over time, art is an asset class that has a potential to generate wealth, espe-

cially when viewed as long-term investments. Art is a limited, scarce resource that benefits from its scarcity. Of course, the maker of the artworks, the artist, needs to have a sales history, a track record, to show value and the potential to increase in value. As it has a fixed supply, this can drive up prices.

You can claim art as a tax deduction by demonstrating that your primary intent in owning the artwork was to generate income, as governed by IRC 212, because the art expense can be deducted as it relates to this provision—it's an expense for production of income. Purchased for business use or corporate holdings under specific circumstances, your fine art, original works by living artists and even col-

lectibles (Pokeman makes a comeback) could qualify. It wouldn't work as a depreciation deduction because it doesn't wear out, and it is an investment that can increase in value, so the cost is a key factor as well as the appreciation when sold.

Our local artists have a wide range of art for sale, some for lease or rent. Our art galleries and interior decor venues offer art all year to enjoy. Our Art Hop season begins in May. The fourth Friday of the month, just show up in downtown Monument 5-8 p.m. Janet Sellers is a professional artist, writer, and speaker, offering fine art, informative talks, and art experiences in the Tri-Lakes region all the way to the Pacific Coast. Contact her at JanetSellers@ocn.me.



Snapshots of Our Community

NASTaP hike in Fox Run Park, Mar. 9



Left: Members of Native American Sacred Trees and Places (NASTaP) and others went on a hike with Heidi Wigand-Nicely to look for Culturally Modified Trees (CMTs) on March 9 in Fox Run Regional Park. CMTs in Fox Run Park have been purported to have been bent, twisted, grafted or otherwise modified by the Ute and other tribes before the late 1800s. One of NASTaP's strategic goals is to identify, document and protect Native American CMTs and sacred places. Nearly 100 trees have been identified in Fox Run Park with distinguishing traits such as bark peels, bent shapes and tie-down marks, girdling and burls, split trunks, and branches. The trees were used for trail markers, burial markers, medicine, and for ceremonial purposes. Fox Run Park and the surrounding areas included in the Front Range are known campsites for the nomadic indigenous peoples for hundreds of years. NASTaP is a 501C3; for more information go to nastap.org or visit its booth at the Roller Coaster Trailhead on April 20 for Earth Day. Contact Membership Chair Linda Davies at ldaviesrex@gmail.com. Photo by Heidi Wigand-Nicely. Caption by Marlene Brown.

Schwarz honored for fundraising

Right: Tamara Schwarz, executive director of Trinity Community Park in Monument (at the right in the photo), was honored with the News 5 Jefferson Award for community service on March 11. TV station KOAA anchor Dianne Derby (at the left in the photo) presented Schwarz with the award that honors those who go above and beyond in serving their neighborhood. In two years, Schwarz raised \$400,000 for state-of-the-art ADA-compliant playground equipment for the park. Schwarz will now compete for the national version of the award. *Photo by Karen Heater.*



Active shooter response training



Above: There are three words to remember if you ever have the unfortunate experience of being where someone starts shooting. Run. Hide. Fight. Cpl. Joshua Marks and Community Resource Officer Kelly Fisher of the Monument Police Department told an active shooter response training class Mar. 13 that the first thing you should do is run. Leave your belongings behind and get out as soon as you can. Then, find a place to hide. And, if possible, fight the shooter by throwing things at their sensitive areas like their head, their eyes, and their groin. There's also a helpful anagram to remember. OODA stands for Observe, Orient, Decide, and Act. Observe what's going on, orient yourself to your surroundings, decide what to do, and then do it. The class was sponsored by the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce and the Schur Success Group. *Caption by Michael Weinfeld. Photo by Laura Kronick.*

Rotary collects products for TLC



Above: Tri-Lakes Dynamic Rotary Club collected 855 pounds of hygiene and household products during the club's Give the Gift of Dignity Hygiene Drive for Tri-Lakes Cares. The drive was held March 13-17. The products included soap, body wash, shampoo, dish soap, laundry soap, and multi-purpose cleaner. From left are James Russell, Laurie Beasley, Brenda Small, Cara Simmons, Jeremiah Baty, and Rich Schur. *Photo courtesy of Tri-Lakes Dynamic Rotary Club.*

Stars of Tomorrow, Mar. 17



Above: Being different can be hard on a kid, but it's what earned these children big prizes at the Monument Hill Kiwanis Club's Stars of Tomorrow talent show on March 17. Palmer Ridge 10th-grader Everleigh Larsen won the top prize of a \$2,000 scholarship in the high school division. She performed Claude Debussy's freeform clarinet piece Premiere Rhapsodie, which showed off her impressive breath control. Second place went to Kurt Lambrech, a Palmer Ridge 11th-grader, who played an eclectic version of George Gershwin's I've Got Rhythm on piano. He went home with a \$1,000 scholarship. The third-place scholarship worth \$500 went to Rowan Vaughn, a senior at Palmer Ridge High, who sang Vanilla Ice Cream from the Broadway musical She Loves Me. Among middle-schoolers, the drum trio Monument Music Drum Corp won the top prize of \$750. Bear Creek Elementary fifth-grader Gavin Barkley and two sixth-graders from Monument Academy, Gunner Skalla and Kay Gillings, alternated playing different drum sets and a set of conga drums. They were the only ones who acted like kids when they heard the results. They jumped up and down and thrust their hands in the air. The Taylor Reeves Dance Troupe came in second among middle-schoolers and went home with \$500. Gymnast Korina Miranda, a third-grader from Bear Creek Elementary, won \$500 for coming in first in the elementary school division. From left, Everleigh Larsen, Kurt Lambrech, and Rowan Vaughn hold their awards. *Photo by Michael Weinfeld.*

WMMI Family Day, Mar. 23



Above: On March 23, the Western Museum of Mining & Industry (WMMI) hosted its Spring Family Day with a focus on mining. WMMI staff person Jamie Gorrell coordinated the event and said she was "very happy with the exhibitor turnout and variety of participatory options provided to visitors." The exhibitors included the Gold Prospectors of Colorado, demonstrating different techniques to mine for gold in water, including panning and sluicing; Cool Science, with exhibits on magnetism and making your own "dippin' dots" ice cream using liquid nitrogen; the Phoenix Gold Mine, an active gold mine in Idaho Springs operated by fourth generation miners that offers tours of the mine for visitors to see copper sulfate, pyrite, and gold veins; and Newmont Mining Corp. Kaitlyn Ragsdale, external relations supervisor with Newmont Mining, said it was an exhibitor at the event to "inform visitors of the active gold mining being done by Newmont and the benefits of gold in everyday life." She also said Newmont appreciated the long and ongoing partnership with the museum, including collaboration on an upcoming display on open pit mining. Information on upcoming events at the museum can be found at wmmi.org. *Photo by David Futey.*

Palmer Lake Easter festivities



Above: Kids had to bundle up on a chilly, windy day to take part in Palmer Lake's Easter festivities on March 30. Children got to hunt for eggs on the town green. Young kids were given a head start before the older children were allowed to take part. The Easter Bunny was there for photos. There were also crafts, face painting and a bake sale. The day started with a pancake breakfast fundraiser put on by the Palmer Lake Fire Association. *Caption by Michael Weinfeld. Photo by Shirley Murray.*



Above: (left) From left, Kay Gillings, Gavin Barkley, and Gunner Skatta hold their awards. **(center)** Standing from left are Greysen Stevens, Taylor Reeves, Ada M.J. Campbell, and Adeline Moats. Ashley Hedstrom is doing the split in front. **(right)** Gymnast Korina Miranda. *Photos by Michael Weinfeld.*

Flags retired, Mar. 23



Above: Members of Boy Scout Troop 17 retired dozens of tattered or faded American flags on March 23. They were assisted by the Monument Fire Department, Monument Police Department, and the Jackson Creek Senior Living facility. *Photo courtesy of BSA Troop 17.*

Our Community Notices

By Janet Sellers

Although we strive for accuracy in these listings, dates or times are often changed after publication. Please double-check the time and place of any event you wish to attend by calling the information number for that event. Please notify us if your event listing needs to be updated.

Tax preparation help

VITA provides free tax preparation to individuals and families who have a household income of less than \$60,000. For more information contact Elizabeth Quevedo, Senior V.P. of Community Impact, Pikes Peak United Way, elizabeth@ppunited-way.org, 719-955-0762 (ofc), 423-333-4431 (cell).

WMMI needs volunteers

The Museum of Mining and Industry is currently recruiting for Visitor Services Associates and Guides. Please consider sharing your time and expertise. Volunteers must be 18 and older and pass a background check. For information about volunteer opportunities, please call 719-488-0880 or email at volunteer@wmmi.org.

Children's Literacy Center

The center provides free one-on-one literacy tutoring to Tri-Lakes children in grades 1-6 who are reading below grade level! Tutoring is at the Tri-Lakes Senior Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:30-6:30 pm, and the Summer Session will run through Aug. 14. For more information, to become a volunteer tutor or to enroll your child, visit www.childrensliteracycenter.org or email Christine Jeffson at Christine@childrensliteracycenter.org.

Community volunteers

Many students need volunteer hours for scouting, civics classes, clubs, or would just like to volunteer for the good of it. Friends of Fox Run Park will have some openings for student volunteers (and grownups, too) most of the year for various tasks. Besides tasks, the group offers information and skills demonstrations for each 2-3 hour session, and celebrates volunteers at the park with annual community events. The Tri Lakes Cares on-site garden in Monument also needs volunteers in Fall, Spring and Summer. Gardening tasks include

preparing garden beds, weeding, sowing seeds, and developing the compost. Bring gardening gloves, some tools will be provided on the workdays. Contact Janet Sellers at JanetSellers@ocn.me or Marlene Brown at MarleneBrown@ocn.me for more information.

Palmer Lake Parking Restrictions

When there is an accumulation of two inches or more of snow, the parking restrictions shall be in effect. No person shall stop, stand, or park any vehicle on any portion of a snow route, or leave, abandon, or permit to remain stalled any vehicle, which is stalled on any portion of a snow route and take immediate action for placing the vehicle to be parked lawfully. Parked vehicles must be removed from all streets within the town, including those which are not designated snow routes. Parking information details: <https://www.townofpalmerlake.com/pw/page/parking-restrictions-during-snow>.

Tri-Lakes Cares needs your support

Tri-Lakes Cares is the only food pantry and human services organization serving northern El Paso County through emergency relief and self-sufficiency programs. The community-based, volunteer-supported center is a critical resource for our neighbors in need. The best way to help support Tri-Lakes Cares is to donate. Visit <https://tri-lakescares.org/donate> to learn how to donate money, medical items, personal supplies, or food. Please check the web for current needs in our food pantry at <https://tri-lakescares.org/donate/current-needs>. Donation drop-off hours are Mon.-Thu., 9 am-4 pm. For more information about Tri-Lakes Cares or how you can help, contact Tri-Lakes Cares at 719-481-4864 or info@tri-lakescares.org.

Silver Key at Tri-Lakes Senior Center

Silver Key at Tri-Lakes Senior Center, formerly known as the Tri-Lakes Silver Alliance Senior Center, has been providing exciting programs and activities to area seniors who have a zest for fun and learning. As the older adult population is growing, our services are in high demand. 719-884-2300 66 Jefferson St, Monument. See ad on page 2.

Need PC help?

Make It Work Clinic for PCs, FREE. Donations appreciated.

We are gauging interest in helping community members with their PCs, please email us if interested. enable@monumentaltimpact.org. 55 Adams St in Downtown Monument. Monumental Impact info: <https://monumentaltimpact.org>. See ad on page 4.

Can you volunteer today?

- **Links to local organizations** with an immediate need for volunteers are listed on the county's website, www.elpasocountyhealth.org/volunteering-and-donations, for groups like Care and Share, Crossfire Ministries, blood donations, Early Connections (volunteer from home opportunity), foster an animal, Medical Reserve Corps of El Paso County, Salvation Army, Silver Key, and United Way (ongoing opportunities).
- **The Colorado State University Extension office** in El Paso County has several opportunities for individuals interested in volunteering. <https://elpaso.extension.colostate.edu/volunteer-opportunities/>
- **El Paso County volunteer-based and nonprofit organizations** rely on the hard work of individuals like you. Find out how you can play a part by becoming a volunteer in El Paso County. Get involved in El Paso County volunteering non-profits and organizations! <https://www.americantowns.com/el-paso-county-co/volunteer-organizations/>.
- **The El Paso County Sheriff's Office Volunteer Program** is composed of a collective citizens group with a true and common desire to partner with the El Paso County Sheriff's Office by volunteering their services while learning more about the internal workings of the law enforcement community. <https://www.epcsheriffsoffice.com/volunteer-program-0>.
- **The El Paso County Volunteer Program** is a wonderful opportunity for citizens to learn about the various functions of county government as well as give back to the community. The County's numerous boards and commissions need your experience, talents and time. <https://bocc.elpasoco.com/volunteer>.

Our Community Calendar

By Janet Sellers

Although we strive for accuracy in these listings, dates or times are often changed after publication. Please double-check the time and place of any event you wish to attend by calling the info number for that event. Please contact calendar@ocn.me with changes and additions.

GOVERNMENTAL BODIES

- Forest Lakes Metropolitan District, Pinon Pines Metropolitan District 1, 2 & 3 board typically meets quarterly on the first Mon. Meetings are held via teleconference. For virtual joining instructions and updates see www.forestlakesmetrodistrict.com.
- El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) regular meeting, usually every Tue., 9 am. View agendas and meetings at www.agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso. Meetings are held at Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade Ave., Suite 150, Colo. Springs. Info: 719-520-643. BOCC land use meetings are held the second and fourth Thursdays of the month (as needed) at 1pm Centennial Hall.
- Monument Town Council meeting, Mon., Apr. 1 & 15, 6:30 pm, Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Normally meets first and third Mon. Info: 719-884-801, www.townofmonument.org/260/Board-of-Trustees-for-remote-attendance-links.
- Palmer Lake Board of Adjustments, Tue., Apr. 2, 5 pm, 28 Valley Crescent St., Palmer Lake. Normally meets first Tue., as needed.
- Donald Wescott Fire Protection District board meeting, Wed., Apr. 24, 4:30 pm. in person at Station 1, 18650 Highway 105, Monument, and via Zoom. Remaining 2024 meetings: June 26 (includes Volunteer Pension Board); Jul. 24; Sep. 25; Nov. 20. For Zoom meeting instructions, agendas, minutes, and updates, visit <http://www.monumentfire.org> or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.
- El Paso County Planning Commission meeting, Thu., Apr. 4 & 18, 9 am. Regional Development Center, 2880 International Circle, Colo. Springs. Meetings are live-streamed on the El Paso County News & Information Channel at <https://www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel>. Normally meets first & third Thu. (as required). Info: 719-520-6300, <https://planningdevelopment.elpasoco.com/2023-meetings/>.
- Woodmoor Water & Sanitation District board meeting, Mon., Apr. 8, 1 pm, 1845 Woodmoor Dr., Monument. Normally meets second Mon. Info: 719-488-2525, www.woodmoorwater.com.
- Tri-Lakes Wastewater Facility Joint Use Committee meeting, Tue., Apr. 9, 10 am, 16510 Mitchell Ave. Meets second Tue. Info: See <https://tlwastewater.com/index.html> Bill Burks, 719-481-4053.
- Lewis-Palmer School District 38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee (now PCAC, formerly DAAC), Tue., Apr. 9, 6-10 pm, Palmer Ridge High School, 19255 Monument Hill Road. This is their last meeting of the year. Meets six times a year. Usually meets monthly, second Tue. Contact info: tmckee@lewispalmer.org.
- Palmer Lake Sanitation District board meeting, Wed., Apr. 10, 9 am, call-in only: 650-479-3208, Access Code 76439078, 120 Middle Glenway. Meets second Wed. Info: 719-481-2732. www.plsd.org.
- Monument Planning Commission meeting, Wed., Apr. 10, 6 pm Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Usually meets the second Wed. To see the options for remote public participation in each meeting, visit www.townofmonument.org/263/Planning-Commission-Board-of-Adjustment. Info: 719-884-8028. www.townofmonument.org.
- Palmer Lake Board of Trustees meeting, Thu., Apr. 11 & 25, 5 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Usually meets second and fourth Thu. Info: 719-481-2953. www.townofpalmerlake.com.
- Monument Academy School Board, Thu., Apr. 11, 6:30 pm, East Campus gym, 4303 Pinehurst Circle. Usually meets the second Thu. Info: 719-431-8001, www.monumentacademy.net/school-board.
- Lewis-Palmer School District 38 board meeting, Mon., Apr. 15, 6-10 pm. 146 N Jefferson St, Monument. The Board of Education meeting will be live-streamed on the district's YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/LPSDCCommunity, agenda, and supporting documents at <https://go.boarddocs.com/ocn/lewispalmer/Board.nsf/vpublic>. Contact Vicki Wood. Phone: 719.481.9546 Email: vwood@lewispalmer.org Website: <https://www.lewispalmer.org>.
- Monument Sanitation District board meeting, Wed., Apr. 18, 9 am, 130 Second St. Zoom meeting. Find joining instructions on the website. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-4886, www.colorado.gov/msd.

- Academy Water and Sanitation District board meeting, Wed., Apr. 18, 6 pm. Usually meets third Wed. Public can join the Skype meeting: <https://join.skype.com/PACujKTn7Nrh>. Check the website for a link: <https://academywsd.colorado.gov/notices-and-alerts>. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-0711, <https://academywsd.colorado.gov>.
- Palmer Lake Town Planning Commission meeting, Wed., Apr. 18, 6 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-2953, www.townofpalmerlake.com.
- Monument Fire District town hall regarding the development of a training center at Station 1, Thu. Apr. 18, 6:30 p.m. Station 1, 18650 Highway 105, Monument. Info: www.monumentfire.org, or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin, at 719-484-0911.
- Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District board meeting, in person or via Zoom, Wed., Apr. 18, 7 pm, Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining instructions at www.bffire.org or contact Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn at 719-495-4300. Meetings are usually held on the third Wednesday.
- El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority meeting, Thu. Apr. 18, 9 am Monument Town Hall Boardroom, 645 Beacon Lite Rd. Normally meets third Thu. Info: 719-488-3603. www.loopwater.org.
- Donala Water & Sanitation District board meeting, Thu., Apr. 18, 1:30 pm, 15850 Holbein Dr. In 2023, meets third Thu., Check the website for the access code for the electronic meeting. Info: 719-488-3603, www.donala-water.org.
- Triview Metropolitan District board meeting, Thu., Apr. 25, 5:30 pm, 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302, Monument. Normally meets third Thu. Info: 719-488-6868, www.triviewmetro.com.
- Monument Fire District board meeting, in person or via Zoom, Wed., Apr. 24, 6:30 pm. Station 1, 18650 Highway 105, Monument. Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining instructions at www.monumentfire.org, or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin, at 719-484-0911.
- Woodmoor Improvement Association Board Meeting, Wed., Apr. 24, 7 pm, Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. The WIA Board usually meets fourth Wed. Info: 719-488-2693, www.woodmoor.org.

WEEKLY & MONTHLY EVENTS

- AARP Black Forest #1100, second Wed., noon. In-person Black Forest Lutheran Church, 12455 Black Forest Rd. All ages welcome. Info: www.aarpchapter-1100blackforest.weekly.com.
- AARP Local Senior Social, fourth Wed. In-person Black Forest Lutheran Church, 12455 Black Forest Rd. Info: www.aarpchapter1100blackforest.weekly.com.
- A.A. Big Book Study, every Thu., 7 pm, Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 W. Baptist Rd. Call 425-436-6200, access code 575176#.
- Alcoholics Anonymous, every Tue. & Thu., 7:30 p.m. Black Forest Lutheran Church, 12455 Black Forest Road, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80908. AA is a fellowship of people who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. Join us with your questions. Info: bfllc@bflchurch.org.
- Al-Anon for family and friends of alcoholics, every Tue. & Thu., 7:30 p.m. Black Forest Lutheran Church, 12455 Black Forest Road, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80908. Al-Anon members are people, just like you, who are worried about someone with a drinking problem. Join us with your questions. Info: bfllc@bflchurch.org.
- Al-Anon Zoom Meeting, Just for Today Online, every Mon., 9-10 am Zoom Meeting ID: 889 4142 7446, Password 349309.
- Al-Anon meeting: Letting Go, every Thu., 9-10:15 am at Ascent Church, 1750 Deer Creek Rd., Monument. For additional information go to www.al-anon-co.org.
- Al-anon Meeting: Monument, every Thu., 7-8 pm, Ascent Church, 1750 Deer Creek Rd., Monument. Info: MonumentSerenity@gmail.com.
- Amateur ham radio W0TLM (Tri-Lakes Monument ham radio Association), third Mon. (except December). All amateur ham radio operators or those interested in becoming one are welcome. Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce Building, 166 2nd Street, Monument. For details, contact Bob Witte, bob@k0nr.com or www.W0TLM.com.

- American Legion Tri-Lakes Post 9-11, second Wed., 6:30pm, Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce Community Meeting House, 300 CO Hwy 105, Monument. New members welcome. Info: Visit website at www.trilakes-post9-11.org.
- Benet Hill Monastery: Let us pray with you, walk in the forest, come and visit prayer sites, every Sun. worship is 10:15 am, 3190 Benet Lane, 80921. See ad on page 3.
- Benet Hill Monastery, Half Day Prayer Group, first Sat., 9 am-12 pm. All vaccinated guests are welcome. Contact Sister Therese at (719) 355-1638 or (719) 355-1650 or stherese@benethillmonastery.org. See ad on page 3.
- Benet Hill Monastery, Centering Prayer Group, every Tue., 10-11 am. All vaccinated guests are welcome. Contact Sister Therese at (719) 355-1638 or (719) 355-1650 or stherese@benethillmonastery.org. See ad on page 3.
- Black Forest Community Church, Centering Prayer Group, first Sat., 8:30-10 am The Old Log Church. Centering prayer opens and closes the meetings with discussion and fellowship in between; open to all.
- Children's Literacy Center, every Mon. & Wed., 5:30-6:30 pm. Provides free one-on-one literacy tutoring to Tri-Lakes children in grades 1-6 who are reading below grade level. Tutoring is at Grace Best Education Center, 66 Jefferson St. Monument. For more information, to become a volunteer tutor, or to enroll your child, visit www.childrensliteracycenter.org or contact Rachel Morin, Tri-Lakes Senior Center Coordinator, CLC 610-246-1047 (cell).
- Colorado Springs Philharmonic Guild Listening Club, third Wed. Free virtual event. Maestro Wilson will conduct monthly hour-long programs. RSVP at www.csp-guild.org.
- Dementia Caregiver Support Group, second Sat., 9:45-11:15 am. Meets in-person, First National Bank Monument (581 Highway 105, Monument, CO 80132). Meets monthly, 2nd Sat. Contact: Registration is required, call 800-272-3900 or email khare@alz.org to register.
- Essential Tremor Support Group, Sat., Apr. 20, (Meets Quarterly) 1-3 pm. For details, contact: Jim Sanchez, 719-660-7275; jimdjs22@gmail.com. Colorado Springs Public Library 21c, 1175 Chapel Hills Drive Colorado Springs, CO 80920.
- Essentrics Fitness Program at Senior Center, every Tue., 9 am & Thu., 10 am, Grace Best Education Center, 66 Jefferson St, Monument, CO 80132. Registration & info: Sue Walker, 719-330-0241, www.trilakesseniors.org.
- Fellowship of Christ Church, every Sun., 9 am. Monument Academy East Campus, 4303 Pinehurst Circle 80908.
- Friends of Fox Run Park, Zoom meeting, fourth Thu., 7 pm, email friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com, they will email you the link the day of the meeting. Join the growing group to learn about volunteering and supporting the park for forest safety, trails, trees, education, special events, and more. Info: friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com.
- Friends of Monument Preserve (FOMP) Trail Repair monthly Work Days, second Tue. (Apr.-Oct.), 5 pm. Meet at Mt Herman Trailhead at the corner of Mt Herman Rd and Nursery Rd, bring gloves. FOMP needs volunteers to help repair the trails in the National Forest Open Space surrounding the Monument Fire Center. The Forest Service recently completed the second phase of Fire Mitigation work and many of the social trails have been damaged. The Forest Service relies on FOMP to maintain these trails. Tools will be provided.
- Fuel Church GriefShare, every Thu., 5:30-7:30 pm, 643 State Highway 105, Palmer Lake. Email info@fuel.org. 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake.
- Fuel Church Sunday Service, every Sun. Service times, 11 am Live service streaming at www.fuelchurch.org at 11:40 am on www.fuelchurch.org. Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Nursery and kids' service. Non-denominational, spirit-filled. Need prayer? Email us at info@fuel.org. See ad on page 5.
- Gleneagle Sertoma, first and third Wed., 11:45 am to 1 pm. Gleneagle Sertoma is the longest continuously active civic service organization in northern El Paso County. Our regular program presenters address local topics of interest to include local developments, community planning and projects, as well as opportunities to serve your community. Contact Harvey LeCato for meeting location and club information at mbca@comcast.net or 719-331-1212.
- Gleneagle Women's Club, membership luncheon, third Fri., (Sep.-June), various venues, 12 activity groups, i.e., hiking, bridge, etc. Guests welcome. For information contact Susan Owen, 719-886-7110.

SPECIAL EVENTS

- GriefShare Support Group, last Tue., 10:30 am-noon. NEW LOCATION: Tri-Lakes Senior Center, 66 Jefferson St. in the Grace Best Elementary School building. The Tri-Lakes Silver Alliance has partnered with Colorado Palliative and Hospice Care to host a 13-session grief support group in Monument. RSVP, info: Sue Walker, 719-330-0241.
- La Leche League breastfeeding support group, second Thu., 12:30 pm. Partners and helpers welcome (and babies and kids, too) so we can meet our breastfeeding goals together. Homestead Direct Primary Care Clinic, 15455 Gleneagle Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80921. For more information, contact RachelKLangley@gmail.com.
- Lions Club Bingo, every Sat. (except the first Sat.), 8:30 am-1 pm and first Mon., 5:30-10 pm Tri-Lakes Lions Club's portion of the proceeds benefit those in need in the Tri-Lakes community. Updated info and location: Jim Naylor, 719-481-8741 or www.trilakeslionsclub.org.
- Monument Library Chess Club, Sat. Apr. 6 & 20, 2-4 pm. We welcome anyone who wants to learn to play chess or wants to play a game with an experienced player. Just show up, or contact Steve Waldmann, (719) 822-0023. Monument Library meeting room, 1706 Lake Woodmoor Dr., Monument. (Information also on the Facebook page: Monument Library Chess Club.)
- Monument Hill Kiwanis Club meeting, every Sat., 8 am. www.MHKiwanis.org. MonumentHillKiwanis@gmail.com for details, guests are welcome. Service leadership clubs, Key clubs, Builders Club, and K-kids at D38 schools. Memberships are open to the public. Info: RF Smith, 719-210-4987, www.MHKiwanis.org.
- Monument Life Recovery Group, every Mon., 6:30-7:30 pm, The Ascent Church, 1750 Deer Creek Rd. This faith-based support group is for those seeking freedom from all hurts, habits, and hang-ups. Daycare for children under age 11. Info: 303-946-2659, www.liferecoverygroups.com/meetings/life-recovery-group-3/.
- Neighborhood Net Ham Radio, every Sat., 10 am Amateur ham radio operators practice for emergencies on weekly repeater nets so neighbors can help neighbors. Sign up at www.mereowx.org/neighborhood-net or contactus@mereowx.org.
- Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO) meeting, Sat., May 11, 10 am-12 pm., Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. HOA legal topics. Members of local HOAs are welcome. Usually meets bi-monthly (Jan., Mar., May, July, Sep., Nov.) on the second Sat. of the month. www.nepco.org.
- Palmer Divide Quiltmakers, first Thu., 6:30-8:30 pm at Monument Chamber of Commerce building, 166 2nd St, Monument, CO.
- Palmer Lake Art Group, second Sat. A variety of art programs are offered after the social gathering and business meetings. Guests welcome. 300 Hwy 105, NE corner of I-25 and 105. 9:30 am. Info: 719-460-4179, www.palmerlakeartgroup.com.
- Palmer Lake Historical Society, Thu., Apr. 18, 7 pm; (doors open at 6:30 pm), Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent St. Usually meets third Thu. Contact:Kokesdm@yahoo.com, https://palmerdivide-history.org.
- Pikes Peak Genealogical Society meeting, Wed., Apr. 10, 7 pm. Meets monthly, second Wed. Members can log in and get the monthly meeting Zoom link. Guests are welcome to attend, please request an invitation from the PPGS president at www.PPGS.org.
- Ridgeview Baptist Church, every Sun., 10:30 am, temporarily meeting at 9130 Explorer Dr., Colorado Springs, 80920. Info: 719-357-6515 or www.ridgeviewcolorado.org. See ad on page 6.
- Senior Bingo, third Wed. Silver Alliance Senior Center, Space is limited to 16. participants. RSVP & info: Sue Walker, 719-464-6873, or email sue@monumentalfitness.
- Senior Book Club, second Fri., 11 am-noon, Silver Alliance Senior Center, all are welcome. Coffee & snacks. RSVP & info: Sue, 719-330-0241.
- Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church, every Sun., Contemporary 9 am; Traditional 10:30 am. A live stream is available at www.tlumc.org/live. Watch live or replay: www.facebook.com/tlumc, www.youtube.com/tlumc.org. Info: 719-488-1365, www.tlumc.org. 20256 Hunting Downs Way, Monument.
- Tri-Lakes Church of Christ Wednesday night fellowship classes, every Wed., 6-7:30 pm, 20450 Beacon Lite Road, Monument (corner of Beacon Lite & County Line Roads). Info: 719-488-9613, gregsmith@trilakeschurch.org, www.trilakeschurch.org.
- Tri-Lakes Cruisers, first Wed., 7 pm. A nonprofit car club. Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce community room, with numerous activities and events each month. Club membership applications are now being accepted and are available on the website: https://tl-cruisers.weebly.com.
- Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce Networking breakfast, first and third Thu., in person or via Zoom 166 2nd Street Monument 7:30-9 am free registration at www.TriLakeschamber.com.
- Tri-Lakes Church of Christ Cabin Conversations: fellowship with meals. every Wed., 6 pm 20450 Beacon Lite Rd.
- Tri-Lakes Dynamic Rotary Club meeting, monthly first and third Thu. 6 pm-8 pm. First Thursday via zoom and third Thursday in person at the Chamber of Commerce, 166 2nd St., Monument. Details: www.tlrotary.com. Trilakesdynamicrotary@gmail.com. Guests welcome. We are a service club serving Tri-Lakes. Memberships open to the public. Info: www.tlrotary.com.
- Tri-Lakes Parkinson's Disease Support Group, third Sat., 10 am-noon, Monument Community Presbyterian Church, 238 Third St., Monument. Info: Syble Krafft, 719-488-2669; Barry (group president), 719-351-9485. If you need any help, please call Syble or Barry.
- Tri-Lakes Women's Club (TLWC) monthly meeting, Fri., Apr. 19, 11:30 a.m. Program: Julie Papa, a licensed attorney, specializing in advising clients in estate planning and estate and trust administration will speak. Eisenhower Golf Club, USAFA. Usually meets monthly on the third Fri. To become a member, or learn about the club, visit our website at www.tlwc.net Contact Info: Tri-Lakes Women's Club membership@tlwc.net.
- Women's A. A. Step Study, every Mon., 6:30 pm, meeting remotely, check for details. Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 Baptist Rd. Park in the west lot. Info: 866-641-9190. Al-Anon Zoom Meeting, Just for Today Online, every Mon., 9:00 - 10:00 am Zoom Meeting ID: 889 4142 7446, Password 349309
- Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7829, third Wed., 7 pm, Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce community room, 166 2nd St., Monument. New members welcome. Info: Post Commander and POW Bruce Beyerly, Bruce.Beyerly@gmail.com.
- VFW Auxiliary to Post 7829, third Wed., 7 pm, The Country Club at Woodmoor, 18945 Pebble Beach Way, Monument. Guests are welcome to join; contact carlsonmkc@aol.com for instructions on how to connect. If you are a relative of a veteran who served on foreign soil during war or other military action, you may be eligible. Info: Kathy Carlson, 719-488-1902, carlsonmkc@aol.com.

- VOLUNTEER TODAY! Our Community News: volunteer mailing days, Thu. Apr. 4 & May 2, approx. 7-8:30 am. We are all volunteers at OCN and need YOUR help, even for an hour or two, getting the papers ready to mail. Contact AllenAlchian@ocn.me or (719) 488-3455.
- Boy Scout Troop 17 Spaghetti Dinner, Sat., Apr. 13, 5:30-7:30 p.m. St Peter Catholic Church. Adults \$10, kids \$5 (10 and under) \$50 maximum for a family. Spaghetti, salad, bread, dessert, and beverage. Location: school gym, 124 1st Street Monument. Proceeds from the event to offset the cost of troop dues and scout adventures. Pasta with a purpose! To purchase tickets or questions contact Lynse, the fundraiser coordinator: lynse@yahoo.com
- 100+ Women Who Care Bi-Annual Meeting. Next Meeting: Wed., Apr. 17, 5 pm, Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Drive. We are 100+ Women committed to contributing \$100 two times a year to local Tri-Lakes charities. Big impact, without a big commitment. For more information on how to join us visit: http://www.100womenwhocaretlakes.com/
- Earth Day nature lovers-Friends of Fox Run Park, Sat., Apr. 20 10-2, Fox Run Park Rollercoaster Rd. Trailhead. Tasks for the park include a nature talk, clean up and other important Earth Day tasks.
- YMCA healthy kids day, Sat., Apr. 20, find out about YMCA season offerings, see ad on page 6.
- Film fest: Monumentaries, nationally acclaimed short films, Thu., Apr. 25, 5:30 pm, Palmer Ridge High School, main auditorium. Door opens at 5 pm. Sponsored by the Tri-Lakes SEW Coalition is a group of students, parents, community members, professionals, and agencies, who meet to foster youth social emotional wellness in the Tri-Lakes community and the Youth Documentary Academy. Light hor d'oeuvres, raffle prizes, free registration.
- Covered Treasures Bookstore, Sat., Apr. 20, 12-3, author Sheryl Peterson will sign her book, Bonedigger's Daughter. Sat., Apr. 27, 1-3, National Poetry Event, poets Mary Burnett Brown, Joseph Murphy and Lon Wartman will discuss and recite from their poetry collections. 105 Second Street, Monument.
- Arbor Day presentation, Fri., Apr. 26, 10 am, Barnhart Orchard (open space off of 3rd street, across from the Santa Fe Trailhead, Monument. Free plants, free presentation on tree health by Cassie Olgren, Parks and Trails Planner, Program Manager for Monument.
- Wildfire Risk Reduction Day, Sat., Apr. 27. Free. Speakers, resources, and information on how to prepare for fire evacuation, evaluate threat of fire to your home and property, reduce your risk, and achieve neighborhood risk reduction efforts. Speakers scheduled at 9:30 am and noon. Information and resource fair from 9 am to 1 pm with exhibits from Monument Fire Department, Peak Alerts, Community Animal Response Team, El Paso County Wildland Fire Team, Colorado State Forest Service, HOPE Animal Assisted Disaster Response, Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management, Pikes Peak CERT Team. Sponsored by Palmer Ridge High School.
- Coworking Community Makerspace Survey: Looking for project workspace and/or equipment for your personal projects or for your business? Please complete survey by Apr. 30. More information: monumentalimpact.org/events/2024-survey/
- Affordable Flooring Connection. See ad on page 2.
- Cornerstone Cleaners, special offers through Apr. 30. 1030 W. Baptist Road, near King Soopers. See ad on page 4.
- Eagle Wine & Spirits, special offers through Apr. 30. Baptist Road next to King Soopers. See ad on page 3.
- McCord's Garden Center open now. See ad on page 5.
- Monument Cleaners, special offers through Apr. 30. 15932 Jackson Creek Pkwy., in Monument Marketplace. See ad on page 5.
- Monumental Med Spa special offers for April. 88 Hwy 105 Palmer Lake. See ad on page 7.
- Mountain View Pella windows, special offers. See ad on page 24.
- Noel Relief Centers, new patient specials, new treatment options. 950 Baptist Rd #130, Monument. See ad on page 7.
- PeakView Windows, special offers for April. See ad on page 24.
- Silver Key senior services, companionship services and more including friendly home visits. Volunteers needed. 719-884-2300. See ad on page 8.
- St. Peter Catholic School preschool now enrolling for August 2024; 124 First St., Monument. See ad on page 2.
- Susan Helmich fine jewelry in store event for buying estate jewelry, Apr. 11 & 12, appointment only; see ad on page 10.
- The Living Room Plants, special offers through Apr. 30. See ad on page 5.
- Tri-Lakes Collision and Auto Service Center, special offers through Apr. 30. See ad on page 5.

- YMCA Spring youth sports registration open now. Sport season starts Apr. 1. See ad on page 6.
- Little Log Church 100th Anniversary Celebration, Sat., May 11, 1-4 pm, 133 High St. Palmer Lake. Info: www.littlelogchurch.com. See ad on page 2.
- Western Museum of Mining and Industry family days in June, July, Aug. See ad on page 12.
- Taste of Tri-Lakes Cares, Wed., May 15, 5:30-8:30 pm. \$40/person. Spruce Mountain Events, 14771 Spruce Mountain Road, Larkspur, CO 80118. https://secure.qgiv.com/for/totlc2024/event/tasteoftrilakes-cares2024/. See ad on page 4.
- Annual Silver Key Senior Summit - Expo of Senior Services: Thu., May 16, 9-2 pm. Great Wolf Lodge. For Seniors, friends or family members, or those serving the senior population. Free admission, food and drinks, it features over 80+ vendors, aging related information sessions. For more information, visit www.silverkey.org/senior-summit or email, development@silverkey.org. See ad on page 8.
- A Time to Dance, The Way Home, Fri., May 17, at Ent Center for the Arts. See ad on page 4.
- YMCA summer day camp for ages 5-12 begins May 28, www.pymca.org/daycamp see ad on page 6.
- Monument Hill foundation (Kiwanis Monument Hill Club) grant applications due May 30. For instructions and to complete an online application, go to: monumenthillfoundation.org and select "Apply for a Grant". See ad on page 10.
- Space Foundation kids' summer fun weeks, June 10-14, or June 15-19, see ad on page 12.
- Front Range Maker's Market Shop, June 22-23 Sat 9-4, Sun 10-3. Indoors at Lewis-Palmer HS. 125+ local makers & artisans. Info: FRmakersmarket.com see ad on page 5.

Our community calendar carries listings on a space-available basis for Tri-Lakes events that are sponsored by local governmental entities and not-for-profit organizations. We include events that are open to the general public and are not religious or self-promotional in nature. If space is available, complimentary calendar listings are included, when requested, for events advertised in the current issue. To have your event listed at no charge in Our Community Calendar, please send the information to calendar@ocn.me or Our Community News, P.O. Box 1742, Monument, Colorado 80132.

Letters to Our Community

Our Community News welcomes letters to the editor on topics of general interest to readers in the Tri-Lakes area. We do not knowingly print letters that are substantially the same as letters that have been submitted to other publications. To ensure that OCN contains a variety of viewpoints, each letter writer is limited to a maximum of one (1) letter per issue and six (6) letters within a twelve (12) month period. To submit a letter, please:

- Email your letter, preferably as an attached Microsoft Word document, to editor@ocn.me or mail a copy to Our Community News, P.O. Box 1742, Monument, CO 80132-1742.
- Identify your submission as a letter to the editor and confirm that it has not been submitted to any other publication.
- Include a suggested headline or title that summarizes the topic you are addressing.
- Limit your letter to no more than 300 words including your suggested headline and closing.
- Include your full name, home address, phone numbers, and email address, if you have one. Only your name will be published.
- Submit your letter so we receive it no later than midnight, Friday, two weeks prior to the publication date.

If you have not received an acknowledgement two days after your email submission or one week after you mailed your letter, please contact John Heiser, Publisher, at (719) 488-3455 or editor@ocn.me. At OCN's sole discretion, we may ask you for clarification of your statements. Include references, such as website links, in your letter for any facts and figures you cite. OCN does not guarantee every letter will appear in print or on-line and does not guarantee a publication date. The number of letters printed on a particular topic or in a particular issue may be limited. Letters containing personal attacks or endorsements for or complaints about individually-named commercial products or services will not be published.

Content

Articles in Our Community News focus on the deliberations of Tri-Lakes area governmental bodies such as the Monument Board of Trustees, Palmer Lake Town Council, and many of the local water, sanitation, fire, and school district boards.

Unlike papers that try to figure out what the "story" is and then get quotes on each side to presumably lead the reader to conclude what the "truth" is, OCN's role is to report in detail on public meetings of local governmental entities. We report what was talked about and what was decided supplemented with board packet information. By reading OCN, you can find out what you might have learned if you had attended those public meetings. In this context, "truth" is that the articles accurately represent what transpired at the meetings.

The content of ads, inserts, and letters to the editor in OCN is solely the responsibility of the advertisers and authors who place those ads, inserts, and letters. The appearance of an ad, insert, or letter in OCN does not imply endorsement of the ad, insert, or letter's content or purpose. While OCN does not knowingly run false ads, inserts, or letters, we do not research the accuracy of that content. Readers are encouraged to do their own research prior to committing to use the products or services offered or accept the conclusions of letters to the editor. Readers with concerns about the content of an ad, insert, or letter should take up those concerns with the advertiser or author.

Contact John Heiser, Publisher, at johnheiser@ocn.me or (719) 488-3455 with any questions.

Look for our next issue Saturday, May 4

Ad space reservations due: **Fri., Apr. 10**
 Finished ad artwork due: **Fri., Apr. 17**
 Letters to the editor due: **Fri., Apr. 17**
 Calendar items due: **Fri., Apr. 24**

Visit our website to read, download, and search all the back issues at **WWW.OCN.ME**



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Biggest snowstorm of the winter, March 13-16



Above: The biggest snowstorm of the winter socked Monument with more than two feet of snow from March 13-15. Travel was next to impossible at the height of the storm. Hundreds of motorists were stranded around the Monument exit off I-25. The truck stops at the exit quickly filled up. A warming center was opened at St. Peter Catholic Church. School was canceled on the 14th and 15th. In the photo, the ornamental bicycle outside the Coffee Cup Café in Monument is covered in snow. *Photo by Michael Weinfeld.* For more weather news see page 18.

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