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Issue #238 — Volume 20 Number 12 — Saturday, December 5, 2020

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## Local Events

Many local events continue to be canceled, suspended, or are being conducted on-line or by conference call. See pages 28-31 for details.

The unpredictability of the COVID-19 situation presents scheduling challenges for area governance entities and other organizations. Because OCN is a monthly publication, 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.

Dates are shown for events even though the event has been canceled or suspended. The date indicates when the event was planned to be held or when it would normally have been held.

**See pages 28-31 for event locations and other details of these and many other local events.**

- **Downtown Monument's Small Town Christmas**, Sat., Dec. 5, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
- **Chess Nuts**, Tue., Dec. 8 and 22, 5-9 p.m.
- **Foot Care Clinic**, Wed., Dec. 9 and 18
- **Tri-Lakes Chamber Monthly Education Series: Speed Networking**, Tue., Dec. 10, 3:30-7:30 p.m.
- **Monument Tour de Lights**, Sat., Dec. 12, 3:30-6:30 p.m.
- **Annual Palmer Lake Yule Log Hunt**, Sun., Dec. 13, 1 p.m.
- **National Wreaths Across America Day**, Sat., Dec. 19, 10 a.m.
- **County's Annual TreeCycle**, Sat.-Sun., Jan. 2-3, or 9-10, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
- **WMMI, regular daily operations resumed**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

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## Circulation

Print Run: 21,860  
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Stacks: 589

## Celebrate small businesses



**Above:** Small Business Saturday kicked off on Nov. 28, a day to celebrate and support small businesses and all they do for our community. In Historic Downtown Monument, businesses were open with flags proclaiming the day and encouraging visitors to "shop small." The Roost is one of the downtown stores, selling vintage collectibles and home décor. For more information on the small businesses in the Town of Monument see <http://downtownmonument.org>. Please join us in supporting our small businesses in the Tri-Lakes area by shopping at a small business for your holiday needs and getting takeout from one of the many local restaurants. *Our Community News* appreciates and depends on the support of local advertisers. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

**Monument Academy School Board, Nov. 4, 12, and 19**

## Board dips deeper into reserves, resets virtual learning

*By Jackie Burhans*

The Monument Academy (MA) School Board held a board training session on Nov. 4 followed by its regular board meeting on Nov. 12 to review the amended budget and reset by adding a week of remote learning. The board held a special meeting on Nov. 19 to discuss and approve an updated budget.

### Board finance training

On Nov. 4, Director of Finance Marc Brocklehurst led a session to educate board members on school financing and fund accounting. He explained that funding comes in descending order from a state share, local share, federal grants, fees, and donations.

eral grants, fees, and donations.

- State share is a base per pupil revenue (PPR) times the October pupil count plus, for some districts, factors such as size, cost of living, personnel, etc. and minus a budget stabilization factor (formerly, the negative factor) to ensure the state's budget remains balanced. State share is about 70% of per pupil revenue and comes from state income and sales taxes.
- Local share comes from local property taxes, calculated by multiplying the home value times the assessment rate (7.15%) times the

**MA (Cont. on 2)**

## Drive-through COVID-19 test site



**Above:** Lines of cars hold people waiting to get tested for COVID-19 at the Monument testing site on Nov. 18. Cars stood for blocks ending at Limbaugh Park as they waited for the Public Health Department drive-through site, located at Lincoln and Jefferson, which has since been moved to a bigger parking lot on Interquest Parkway. One person in line said it took over an hour to be seen as cases rise for a third wave in El Paso County. The test is free. Check for current testing locations and hours at [www.elpasocountyhealth.org/covid-19-testing-information](http://www.elpasocountyhealth.org/covid-19-testing-information). *Photo by Allison Robenstein.*

**Triview Metro District, Nov. 19**

## District contemplates decrease in mills and change in address

*By Jennifer Kaylor*

The Triview Metropolitan District Board of Directors received input about tax revenue for the next year and the results of a new office location search. The 2021 budget public hearing, originally scheduled for this Nov. 19 meeting, was postponed to the district's Dec. 10 board meeting.

All board directors, district accountant Cathy Fromm, water attorney Chris Cummins, and general counsel Gary Shupp attended the meeting remotely. Shupp experienced technical difficulties and was only able to participate for a portion of the meeting.

Triview is a Title 32 special district in Monument that provides road, landscaping, and parks and open space maintenance, and water and wastewater services to Jackson Creek, Promontory Pointe, Sanctuary Pointe, and several commercial areas. See <https://triviewmetro.com/districtMap> for a map of district boundaries.

**TRIVIEW (Cont. on 7)**



**MA (Cont. from 1)**

number of mills (41) assessed by the school district. District mills include a statutorily required 23 mills plus the mills needed to

fund the shared \$4 million 1999 mill levy override (MLO) and pay for voter-approved district bonds. Additional money comes from the specific ownership tax on new cars and on annual auto registra-

tion. This totals about 30% of per pupil revenue.

- Additional funding comes from federal grants from the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, Title 2 and 4 funds; instructional fees set by MA; and donations received. Federal revenue is about 4-5% of the overall income.

Brocklehurst then explained that MA uses fund accounting, which includes a General Fund, a Preschool Fund, the MA Building Corporation (MABC) Fund, the MA Foundation Fund (MAF) and the Activities Fund. The Preschool Fund tracks preschool tuition, salary, and benefits. The MABC and MAF Funds take in money from the General Fund and cover bond principal and interest payments for the west and east campuses, respectively. The Activities Fund tracks fees paid by parents and costs for sports and field trips.

Brocklehurst then explained the financial statements he prepares and provides for the board along with key financial metrics he tracks to monitor and measure identified goals. He also reviewed the budget process, which included a preliminary budget in April based on estimates of PPR, pupil

counts, and expected cuts due to COVID-19. He also previewed the proposed amended budget using the updated PPR from the state and actual enrollment counts from October as well as detailing use of Coronavirus Aid, Relief, Economic Security Act (CARES) funds for each campus. He reviewed the expenses, explained suggested reductions, and projected a significant increase in the use of reserve funds.

Board President Melanie Strop commended Brocklehurst for cutting spending and said MA didn't have a spending issue but rather had an income issue. She asked if there was any way to increase the schools' PPR by working with the state. Brocklehurst said that the state share would be hard to change because they had already done a good job protecting the K-12 budget at the expense of other areas of the state budget. He said that districts' PPR varies based on various factors, but the big difference is in the local MLO. It would, he said, be easier to champion a mill levy increase and get the word out to the community about the request.

#### **Budget amended to increase reserve use**

At the regular meeting, the board reviewed the amended budget and asked

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to postpone approval until they could go into more detail in a special meeting on Nov. 19. At the regular and special meetings, Brocklehurst and Herrera reviewed changes to the preliminary budget from April including:

Revenue from PPR has increased \$190 from the estimated amount to \$7,664 per pupil. Federal funding has increased by \$173,000 for coronavirus relief. Revenue has decreased due to a decrease in pupil count. While the secondary school has five more students than estimated, the elementary school has 40 fewer students for a net loss of 35 students and \$268,000 in revenue. Revenue has decreased by \$158,000 from the Colo-

rado Charter School Program (CCSP) grant for a new or expanded charter school due to the reduced enrollment of high school students from original projections.

Expense impacts include shifting funds due to teacher assignments to specific campuses, hiring a contractor for speech pathology vs. an in-house employee, and increasing expenses for equipment and technology to support hybrid and remote learning. Expenses were incurred to hire teachers and paraprofessionals for the fourth- and fifth-grade classes added at the elementary school. The east campus saw an increased expense of around \$40,000 due

to potential payments around some of the land development associated with the secondary school. There was an increase of \$270,000 in furniture and other equipment expense not reimbursed by the CCSP grant. Expenses for advertising were decreased, but \$5,000 was moved into advertising from reduced dues and fees. The budget for repair and maintenance was decreased.

The overall impact of the amended budget was to increase the use of reserves from the estimated \$440,000 to \$810,000. This leaves an ending fund balance of just over \$2 million, which includes \$1.1 million required by the bond covenants, \$25,000 for

TABOR reserves, and about \$600,000 for a rainy-day fund.

While MA is appealing the reduction of the CCSP grant, any money recovered would



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come at the end of the grant period, so MA is considering applying for a line of credit fill the gap and reduce the amount needed from reserves.

The board discussed many ideas for increasing students and revenue going forward and unanimously voted to adopt the amended budget.

#### Reset instituted to virtual learning

At the regular board meeting, Herrera said that state requirements to quarantine based on possible exposure had made it challenging to keep the east campus secondary school open. Although the data did not show transmission between students and/or teachers happening at the school, the presence of positive cases and contact tracing to identify who had been in proximity left the school scrambling to keep enough staff on hand to provide the level of education desired along with sufficient supervision.

Herrera stated that MA went from the teens to hundreds staying home within a week, with 55% of students and 40% of staff out at one time at the secondary level. Herrera said the district superintendent was supportive in helping to define when MA was reaching a tipping point where it could not provide education safely. The district has moved to all remote learning through the end of the semester. She suggested it made sense to consider using Thanksgiving break to catch up and get on top of the situation.

At the special meeting on the 19th, the decision was made to ask that everyone at the secondary school stay at home the week after Thanksgiving in order to reset the number of students and staff rotating in and out from quarantine. It wasn't clear at that time that this was also necessary at the elementary school, however when the message was sent to parents it did include both campuses. In-person learning will resume on Dec. 7.

#### Highlights

The following items were highlighted at the board meeting:

- The board unanimously passed a motion to allow the Governance Committee to make administrative changes to policies.
- MA has taken title of a bus acquired from St. Peter Catholic Church and now needs to file for a license and acquire a driver.
- The board asked parents to consider becoming substitute teachers, which requires a bachelor's

degree.

- Board member Ryan Graham reported that they were not able to find money in the budget for a one-time bonus for teachers. Instead the PTO will raise funds from parents along with the Teacher Gift Fund Committee with a plan to deliver checks by Dec. 11.
- Board member Chris Dole reported that the School Advisory and Accountability Committee (SAAC) will produce a mid-year survey before winter break and hopes to increase participation levels. SAAC is also focused on the Uniform Improvement Plan, which will be submitted to the district in January.
- The west campus Parent-Teacher Organization raised \$21,000 from its Fun Run ninja obstacle course and hopes to install an Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant concrete pad and walkway with a pavilion sometime over spring break or summer.

\*\*\*\*\*

The next meeting will be on Thursday, Dec. 10 at 6 p.m. The MA School Board usually meets at 6 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. Meetings may be held in-person and via Zoom, which will be streamed to the MA YouTube channel. For more information on how to join the meeting in person or virtually or to submit a public comment, see <https://bit.ly/ma-boe>.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at [jackieburhans@ocn.me](mailto:jackieburhans@ocn.me).

#### Lewis-Palmer District 38 Board of Education, Nov. 16

## Board reviews practices during pandemic, recognizes first responders and student achievement

By Harriet Halbig

On Nov. 16, the Board of Education of Lewis-Palmer District 38 recognized several first responders for their aid to the district and a student officer elected to Key Club International. Superintendent KC Somers updated conditions during the pandemic.

Somers said that he couldn't say enough about the district's staff. They are tired, stressed, and overwhelmed, yet continue to do all they can to work on

behalf of the students, he said.

A major challenge at this time is to have enough staff to cover all needs in the district. There have been three outbreaks of the virus in the district since August. Contact tracing is being used to determine which individuals must quarantine.

In response to a question, Somers said that in the event of an illness, the family of the student reports to the principal or school nurse. The district then tries to trace contacts between the student and others during the previous 48 hours. This is most difficult in the high schools where students have a much broader number of contacts.

The El Paso County Health Department has not provided information on when schools would be required to pivot to distance learning, Somers said. In our district, we evaluate the situation on a site-by-site basis. Health officials maintain that these decisions are up to each individual district.

Board Secretary Tiffney Upchurch said that she feels safe with her children in school and that the district is taking all necessary precautions for their safety.

Board President Chris Taylor commented that the district is offering families the broadest possible choice between online, full-time in person for elementary, and a hybrid of the two at the secondary level. He said that he hopes that the staff may be able to have some down time during the holidays.

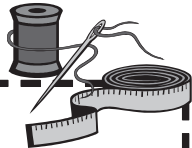
#### Community recognitions

The board recognized a number of first responders for their support of the district. These included:

- Chief Christopher McCarthy of the Palmer Lake Fire Department, who assisted during a recent fire at Palmer Lake Elementary School.
- Commander Jon Hudson of the Monument Police Department.
- Chief Jason Vanderpool of the Palmer Lake Police Department, who ensured that school staff were not ticketed for parking near the school during a time when parking on the streets is otherwise forbidden.

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**Above:** Superintendent KC Somers recognized a number of first responders for their support of the school district. They are, from left, Chief Kevin Nielsen of Woodmoor Public Safety; Deputy Chad Wheat of the El Paso County Sheriff's Office and a Lewis-Palmer High School Resource Officer; Dennis Coates, D38 Chief of Safety and Security; Chief Christopher McCarthy of the Palmer Lake Fire Department; Commander Jon Hudson of the Monument Police Department, and Superintendent KC Somers. *Photo courtesy of District 38.*

- Chief Kevin Nielsen of Woodmoor Public Safety for his help in directing traffic around the schools during high volume times and guarding the buildings at night.
- Deputy Chad Wheat, a school resource officer at Lewis-Palmer High School.
- Dennis Coates, District 38 chief of Safety and Security, who has been with the district for over 20 years as a coach and school resource officer before taking on his current role.

Chief Chris Truty of the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District was unable to attend.

The board also recognized Caroline Bushnell, a senior at Palmer Ridge High School, who was elected vice president of Key Club International. Bushnell has participated in activities related to the Key Club, sponsored by Kiwanis International, for over eight years. She raised money for Australian Relief and Trick or Treat for UNICEF and was active in supporting clean water initiatives.

#### Audit review

John Paul LeChevallier of auditing firm CliftonLarsonAllen reviewed the draft audit report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020. He declared it a clean document, meaning the board can assume all numbers can be relied on. The report includes long-term and short-term reviews of the financial condition of the district.

He said that the district has strengthened its financial condition since last year.

Information about Monument Academy is also included in the audit.

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**Refinancing of bonds**

The board approved the refinancing of bonds that will mature in 2029. Taylor stressed that the only change in the bonds will be the interest rate, not the maturity date. For details on this transaction, see <https://www.ocn.me/v20n11.htm#d38>.

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**Above:** Superintendent KC Somers shares a congratulatory elbow bump with Commander Jon Hudson of the Monument Police Department. *Photo courtesy of District 38.*



**Above:** Palmer Ridge senior Caroline Bushnell was recognized for her election as vice president of Key Club International, an organization sponsored by Kiwanis to teach leadership skills to high school students. *Photo courtesy of District 38.*

### Strategic Plan—ensure high-quality instruction and relevant educational experiences for all students—Goal 2

The board discussed the district's mission statement and reviewed talking points that would enable the district to communicate with the community about the goals and methods of the district, especially those citizens who do not have students in the schools. Taylor and Upchurch worked together on this initiative.

Taylor said he would like the public to know the differences between requirements and expectations for public, private, and charter schools.

Somers commented that we now work in a system that is compliance driven. We give ourselves permission to call out contradictions, and teachers have some leeway to meet requirements. We need to think about what constraints we can remove in order to try

new things.

Taylor agreed that public schools have more constraints than charter or private schools.

In determining how to gauge the success of the district's actions, the board discussed how students should be prepared to enter the world of higher education and the workforce by developing a list of desirable skills such as communication (written and verbal), teamwork, problem solving, critical thinking, and leadership.

The board also agreed that it would be valuable to survey graduates immediately after graduation and a few years later to determine whether the district's methods are successful.

Chief Academic Officer Lori Benton answered questions regarding assessments, curriculum, and other aspects of the district's programs. Some aspects that she addressed were investment in professional development, creating multiple pathways for students through career and technical education and other co-curricular activities, and expanded use of technology at all grade levels.

The board approved minor changes in the district boundaries. The state requires that boundaries be examined every four years to ensure that they are relatively equal in population and contiguous. Redistricting was based on demographic figures from 2018.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Lewis-Palmer District 38 Board of Education generally meets on the third Monday of each month at the district's Learning Center, 146 Jefferson St. in Monument. Due to the winter break, the December meeting will be held on Dec. 14. Seating is limited due to virus regulations. Meetings are livestreamed on the district's Facebook page, accessed through [lewis-palmer.org](http://lewis-palmer.org).

Harriet Halbig may be reached at [harriethalbig@ocn.me](mailto:harriethalbig@ocn.me).

### Lewis-Palmer District 38 District Accountability Advisory Committee, Nov. 10

## Committee hears about Palmer Ridge High School, Special Education activities

By Harriet Halbig

The District Accountability Advisory Committee of Lewis-Palmer District 38 held a virtual meeting on Nov. 10. In keeping with tradition, the committee was introduced to the campus of one school in the district and then received reports on board and legislative matters and activities in the Special Education (Exceptional Student) Department.

Principal Terry Bramschreiber reported on his tenure at Palmer Ridge High School, where he has been principal for a little over a year. He said that as a previous principal at Discovery Canyon he had much exposure to the activities at Palmer Ridge, as they were founded a year apart and shared many athletic competitions.

Palmer Ridge now has a population of 1,217 students. Its philosophy includes emphasis on an active professional learning community, innovative teaching, social and emotional well-being of students and staff, and community engagement.

The school offers many pathways to students including advanced placement classes, Project Lead the Way with instruction in engineering, several on-line programs, DECA (distributive education clubs of America), offering training and competition in the area of entrepreneurship, Ridgeline training in

media, and a new course in cybersecurity. Students also have the opportunity to attend classes at Pikes Peak Community College for college credit and some classes taught on campus by teachers certified to offer college credit.

The school had a 15% lower budget this year and has tried to maximize use of CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act) funding and weigh repairing versus replacing items in the school.

Bramschreiber explained the challenges of maintaining school spirit during the coronavirus pandemic and maintaining high-quality instruction during hybrid learning in addition to building relationships with students when personal contact is limited.

### Board of Education and legislative update

Board Liaison Tiffney Upchurch reported on the Board of Education's continuing emphasis of applying its strategic plan to all actions. *For details on the Strategic Plan, see <https://www.ocn.me/v20n11.htm#d38>.*

The November election resulted in three issues that will affect school funding. The first of these was the repeal of the Gallagher Amendment, which had enforced a balance between residential tax and commercial tax rates. The current rate of taxation on residences is a little over 7%. Had Gallagher continued, the rate would have fallen below 6.5%. Proposition EE regarding a tax on tobacco products including vaping products is expected to yield \$1.75 million in 2021-22 to fund expanded preschool, eviction assistance, and tobacco education. Proposition 116 lowered the personal income tax rate from 4.64% to 4.55%.

She also reported that the board was able to give staff members a bonus in their November check.

### Special Education update

Executive Director of Student Services Rick Framp-

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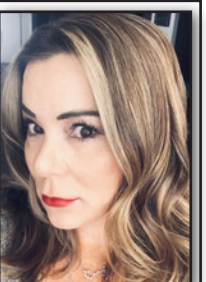
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Christina Cotton



ton reported on developments in his department during the pandemic. He said 663 students are receiving Special Education services this year, a slight decrease from last year. He attributed the decline to a decrease in preschool enrollment due to parental concerns of safety in attending in-person school.

Frampton also said that many students receiving services are medically fragile and have difficulty with remote learning. He hopes to devise a way to maximize in-person learning, perhaps during the secondary Flex Friday program.

Parent Liaison Michelle Nay reported on the Special Education Advisory Committee, which is a state mandated group encouraging networking among parents, advocacy for students with disabilities, and sharing of best practices. Nay said that the group tries to discuss special education in general rather than individual cases.

Over the years, the group has been trying to increase attendance by par-

ents, teachers, and community members. The previous week's meeting, the first of this school year, had a much larger than usual attendance because it was held online.

Nay then briefly reported on the Community/Family/School Partnership program, which endeavors to create a welcoming environment in schools and two-way communication between families and schools regarding student progress.

This involves communicating with families about how the school system works and strengthening family input in decision-making.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Lewis-Palmer District 38 District Accountability Advisory Committee meets five times a year. This year, all meetings will be held virtually. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Jan. 12 from 7 to 8:30.

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

### TRIVIEW (Cont. from 1)

The two-part Nov. 19 board packet may be accessed via [https://triviewmetro.com/assets/documents/board/agenda/2020/BoardPacket\\_RegularMeeting\\_2020-11-19\\_part1.pdf](https://triviewmetro.com/assets/documents/board/agenda/2020/BoardPacket_RegularMeeting_2020-11-19_part1.pdf) and [https://triviewmetro.com/assets/documents/board/agenda/2020/BoardPacket\\_RegularMeeting\\_2020-11-19\\_part2.pdf](https://triviewmetro.com/assets/documents/board/agenda/2020/BoardPacket_RegularMeeting_2020-11-19_part2.pdf).

#### Ballot issue passes, fewer mills to be collected

Early in the meeting, District Manager Jim McGrady extolled Triview residents for passing ballot issue 6A in the Nov. 3 election. Official election results, posted Nov. 24, were 2,095 yes/for and 1,454 no/against. The district may now use up to seven mills of its potential 35-mill cap on general operations. Before the election, all mills collected had to be directed toward paying debt service.

McGrady stated, "I think it sets the district up very well going forward. If there's a decrease in sales tax income for whatever reason, ... we still have a way to make sure that the improvements that are needed in the district are made. ... It also helps us eliminate our dependence on various fees that we collect at the time of building construction. ... This seven mills, up to seven mills, could prove to be very, very beneficial as the district approaches build-out or economic conditions change. I could not be happier, I'm extremely proud of the fact that the voters agreed with us and passed this initiative. ..."

During board discussion, McGrady proposed that the district temporarily decrease the number of mills collected from its current 32 mills to 27 mills in 2021. He explained his rationale: The district's debt payment is a fixed \$2.53 million and is prohibited from making extra or larger debt service payments before 2026. McGrady suggested directing revenue from 26 of the 27 mills toward debt service and revenue from the remaining mill toward general operations. By his calculation, this would create a cushion of about \$104,000 that could be placed in the debt service reserve fund and about \$101,000 for the operations and maintenance fund. He asserted the need to begin restoring operational monies after the Jackson Creek Parkway project and road repair and maintenance expenses.

One director voiced concerns about not collecting revenue from a higher number of mills for making advance payments once the prepayment penalty expires in 2026. Others were apprehensive about dramatic, annual fluctuations in the mills collected and

whether the Nov. 3 voter-approved Amendment B of the Colorado constitution—the Gallagher Amendment repeal—would jeopardize future assumptions about property tax revenue.

Addressing the issue of accumulating funds to pay down the bonds, McGrady stated that collecting extra revenue now means the people currently living in the district would pay the bulk of the debt. Also, by collecting revenue to meet the bond payment with a small surplus, Triview can steadily build its debt service reserve fund for potential advance payments and as a means to provide stability, thereby minimizing fluctuations in the yearly mills collected. McGrady confirmed that the district's bond payments applied to principal and not just interest. Regarding the Gallagher Amendment repeal, McGrady and Cummins demonstrated consensus that the change would likely provide greater residential assessment rate predictability.

The board agreed unanimously to collect 27 mills for 2021 and McGrady acknowledged that final adjustments to the 2021 budget would reflect a 27-mill property tax revenue.

#### Manager seeks expanded office space

At the Oct. 6 special meeting, directors authorized McGrady to explore moving the Triview office to a larger space. Having completed a search of commercial properties available within set location parameters, McGrady presented an arrangement that combined two lease agreements and a contract to buy and sell real estate. The documents spelled out a plan whereby Mason Law and Planning Group LLC would purchase Triview's current property—suite 300 in the Old Forest Point building—for \$250,000. In turn, Triview would lease Mason Law's neighboring suite 302 and adjacent storage space for up to four years and potentially a fifth year.

Triview would apply \$28,160 per year of a four-year lease expense for a total of \$112,640 against Mason Law's \$250,000 purchase price resulting in zero out-of-pocket lease expenses and net cash of \$137,360 at closing for Triview. If Triview leaves the leased property earlier than the four years, Mason Law would reimburse Triview the unused lease payment. The agreement also allowed Triview to transition between the two suites from Dec. 1 through Jan. 31 at no charge.

When a director asked why he

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opted to lease instead of purchase new office space, McGrady responded that office space within a customer-friendly locale was scarce. He described how commercial property builders and owners trend toward leasing instead of selling because of the income stream and that he scoured the area and found nothing available. Also, the purchase prices of potential, slightly larger spaces in the Old Forest Point building exceeded \$500,000. McGrady indicated that the space next door provides an easy transition, a nice conference room, and extra space for current, and possibly additional staff. He estimated that the few years that Triview leased suite 302 would provide time for the district to save money for a future purchase and for other properties to be built, e.g., the proposed Village at Jackson Creek, or for more suitable existing properties to become available.

McGrady and Cummins concurred that the impact of burgeoning remote work would likely free office space within the anticipated lease term. Acknowledging that purchasing a new space was preferable, McGrady affirmed the current sale and lease option as a good opportunity.

After a lengthy discussion, the directors unanimously approved the lease agreements—one for 1,607 square feet of office space and one for 153 square feet of storage space, approved the contract to buy and sell commercial real estate for \$250,000, and authorized McGrady to sign the respective documents.

Other action items the board reviewed and approved included resolution 2020-17, the district’s annual administrative resolution for calendar year 2021 and a letter of engagement

pertaining to the district’s general legal counsel. The administrative record contained two minor changes: designation of The Gazette as the newspaper of general circulation for publishing the district’s legal notices. The board included Our Community News Inc. (OCN) as a secondary newspaper for occasions when OCN’s publication dates aligned with the district’s needs. The resolution also confirmed that board meetings for 2021 would continue to be held on the third Thursday of the month.

The letter of engagement established White Bear Ankele Tanaka and Waldron (WBA) as Triview’s new general counsel. Shupp, who is on retainer and has served the district in this capacity for several years, is retiring and will end his tenure as of Dec. 31, 2020. WBA’s services would be rendered on an hourly basis and begin on Jan. 1, 2021.

Additional reports

- The A-yard building, intended to store large equipment and provide road, open space, and public works crews some amenities, is officially under construction.
- Progress on wells A-9 and D-9 at Sanctuary Pointe included installation of motor components called variable frequency drives, construction of a pergola, and near completion of the restrooms. McGrady praised the design and aesthetics of the facility.
- Planning for the northern water delivery system was progressing well. McGrady confirmed that a recent engineering walk-through, with the exception of a few tweaks, successfully determined the routing of the pipeline. The associated

memorandum of understanding circulated by Triview last month generated signature intentions from the Town of Monument and Forest Lakes Metropolitan District. McGrady anticipated that Forest View Acres Water District would submit a letter of support. Other responses had not been received.

- Revamping of the district’s website forged ahead. Once the new website is complete, the district plans to encourage residents to submit photos for possible publication on the site.
- The district is exploring possible annexation/inclusion of Higby Road into its boundaries and the potential traffic impacts that the Grandwood Ranch development may create. See related Board of County Commissioners article on page 17.
- McGrady expected to submit the district’s purpose and need statement for its Pueblo Reservoir Excess Capacity agreement on Nov. 20. This statement is a critical component of Triview’s National Environmental Policy Act Environmental Assessment obligation.

At 7:50 p.m., the board entered executive session §24-6-402(4)(a)(b) and (e)

legal advice and negotiations regarding the following general topics: negotiations associated with water delivery infrastructure, wastewater infrastructure, and water storage on the Arkansas River and its tributaries; negotiations with potential contractors and miners concerning the Stonewall Springs Reservoir Complex; and negotiations regarding acquisition of renewable water resources. OCN later confirmed that the board did not take actions nor make decisions following the executive session.

\*\*\*\*\*

The next Triview board meeting is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Dec. 10 and will include the public hearing, review, and adoption for the 2021 budget. The board will resume meeting on the third Thursday of the month in 2021. Check the district’s event calendar at <https://triviewmetro.com/home> or call 488-6868 for meeting schedule updates and to confirm if the meeting will be in person or via conference call. In-person board meetings are currently held at 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 300, Monument. See also “Triview Metropolitan District” on Facebook or Twitter. [com/@TriviewMetro](https://www.facebook.com/TriviewMetro).

Jennifer Kaylor can be contacted at [jenniferkaylor@ocn.me](mailto:jenniferkaylor@ocn.me).

Donala Water and Sanitation District, Nov. 19

Regionalization considerations include water and wastewater

By Jennifer Kaylor

At the Nov. 19 Donala Water and Sanitation District meeting, directors and staff considered opportunities to serve neighboring and regional counterparts.

“Regional” is the word

In his manager’s report, General Manager Jeff Hodge described the status of three separate but related projects that show promise for regional or semi-regional cooperation. He presented information from Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) that indicated its interest in engaging the regionalization subcommittee of the Pikes Peak Regional Water Authority Regional Working Group (PPRWA) to maximize reusable water supplies.

Donala’s directors reviewed CSU’s statement of work that described the time and geographic boundaries by which a yet-to-be-procured engineering contractor would explore broad solutions for reusable water storage, conveyance, and screening methods. CSU recommended formation of a separate organizational structure so that water entities not associated with PPWRA could participate in discussions and help identify potential solutions.

Stating that the PPRWA represents water service organizations from a variety of locations throughout El Paso County and that CSU’s proposal received Donala water attorney Rick Fendel’s endorsement, Hodge requested board approval for Donala to participate in the nascent regional project. After hearing comments that the project should not simply redo the El Paso County Water Plan and that participants should establish some form of confidentiality agreement, the directors confirmed their support for Donala’s participation.

The two remaining projects pertain to wastewater instead of drinking water. Hodge stated that the North Monument Creek Interceptor (NMCI), the

potential regional wastewater pipeline that would transport waste flows from the U.S. Air Force Academy’s Visitor Center and northern El Paso County wastewater districts to CSU’s J.D. Phillips Water Resource Recovery facility, is still somewhat on hold. An environmental assessment, which is required by the National Environmental Policy Act, must be completed before remaining steps can occur. Hodge received word that the assessment had not progressed, but the lapse was not a cause for concern.

Related to the NMCI is a short-term wastewater pipeline connecting the Academy’s Visitor Center to the treatment plant, the Upper Monument Creek Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility (UMCRWWTF), which is managed by Donala and partner-owned by Donala, Triview Metropolitan District (Triview), and Forest Lakes Metropolitan District. Last spring, Triview offered to support the interim quasi-regional project by allowing the Academy to use Triview’s excess wastewater treatment capacity. See <https://www.ocn.me/v20n4.htm#tvmd>.

Hodge confirmed that CSU, Donala, Triview, and the Academy have an interim agreement to coordinate the Visitor Center’s wastewater service until the NMCI is complete. Because the Visitor Center would normally receive wastewater services from CSU, the four entities needed to establish cost and service parameters.

ORC contract evaluated

At the October meeting, the board directed Hodge to gather information about the Monument Sanitation District’s (MSD) request to receive operator in responsible charge (ORC) services from Donala. Hodge reported that he had toured MSD’s four lift stations and found them to be functioning well and in good shape despite minimal servicing over the past few months.



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He provided feedback to MSD about items that should be addressed in the near future.

Compiling information from his tour and data gathered by Donala's consulting engineering firm GMS Inc., Hodge developed a rate schedule and a breakdown of daily, weekly, monthly, and annual work tasks. MSD's legal counsel developed a contract that had been reviewed by Donala's counsel and both boards as of Nov. 19. MSD requested clarification about some terminology listed under service charges in Hodge's rates and tasks attachment, but otherwise accepted the contract as written.

Donala's directors supported adding language to clearly define responsibilities pertaining to repairs and

unanimously approved the contract with the added provision. The ORC arrangement, with an initial term of six months, was set to begin Dec. 1. See [www.ocn.me/v20n11.htm#msd](http://www.ocn.me/v20n11.htm#msd).

**Director position to open soon**

Board President Ed Houle announced that a director's position will be open as of January. Residents who are interested in serving on the Donala Board of Directors need to submit a letter of interest and/or a resume to Hodge at the district office by Dec. 31.

**Additional updates**

- Hodge endorsed a 3% water and sewer rate increase for 2021. He reported that it was aligned with the consumer price

index and past cost of service evaluations. The board approved the change unanimously.

- Safety measures taken in response to tightened COVID restrictions included splitting staffing schedules, limiting access to the office, and wearing masks. Hodge expressed willingness to consider Plexiglass barriers in some office areas.
- The 2020 water main replacement project was about 85% complete, reported Superintendent of Water Operations Mark Parker. He anticipated a completion date of Dec. 4.
- The owner of four lots in Struthers Ranch Subdivision Filing 4 requested confirmation of water

and sewer availability from Donala. Hodge reported that the owner was requesting permission from El Paso County to replat the lots into one large parcel. Other communications indicated that a potential specialty retail center would be developed.

- Most of Colorado was experiencing extreme drought as shown by a Nov. 10 report provided by Hodge. See <https://www.drought.gov/drought/states/colorado> for more current drought information.

At 2:50 p.m. directors moved into executive session §24-6-402(4)(a), C.R.S.—Potential water right purchase. OCN later confirmed with that the

board did not make recordable decisions following the executive session.

\*\*\*\*\*

Generally, board meetings are held the third Thursday of the month, however, the next board meeting will be held Dec. 10 and will likely be an online meeting due to coronavirus restrictions; call (719)488-3603 or access [www.donalawater.org](http://www.donalawater.org) to receive up-to-date meeting information. The district office is located at 15850 Holbein Drive, Colorado Springs. See <https://www.donalawater.org/> to access the current board packet, prior meeting minutes, and the 2020 meeting calendar.

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Monument Sanitation District, Nov. 18

# Board postpones budget approval due to failure to post it

By Allison Robenstein and Lisa Hatfield

The Monument Sanitation District (MSD) Board of Directors held a regular meeting Nov. 18. The budget had not been publicly posted. However, board members did still open and close the public hearing but had to postpone the scheduled Resolution to Adopt 2021 Budget and Ap-

propriate Funds to Dec. 16.

The board also moved forward with using Donala Water and Sanitation District as its Operator in Responsible Charge (ORC) and approved a resolution confirming the current rate and fee schedule would not increase now. Tri-Lakes Wastewater Facility (TL-WWTF) Manager Bill Burks attended the meeting to answer

questions about the timing of invoices.

The board members present in person in the MSD conference room were Chairman Dan Hamilton, Treasurer John Howe, Secretary Marylee Reisig, Director Laura Kronick, and MSD Special District Attorney Joan Fritsche of Fritsche Law. Note: The audio quality of the online meeting

continues to be low, despite repeated complaints from staff and OCN reporters attempting to attend the public meeting online due to the pandemic.

Director Katie Saucedo was noted absent as was Jim Kendrick, MSD's Environmental/Regulatory Compliance advisor. Accounts Administrator Cheran Allsup was also absent.

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2021 budget public hearing held but approval delayed

Originally, the board was expected to

approve the 2021 budget and appropriate money to specific funds. But this had to be tabled when Colorado local

government budget laws were not followed. During public comment, this reporter (Robenstein) asked why the public did not have access to the draft 2021 budget prior to the public hearing as is required by law. Hamilton said it was an oversight and it would be posted for anyone to see. Paper copies are now posted on the MSD windows for review.

**Note:** The district shall be subject to the “Local Government Budget Law of Colorado,” CRS § 29-1-106 (2016) that required special districts to post notice of the annual public hearing before the meeting.

Hamilton opened the public hearing on the 2021 budget, and Fritsche insisted that even though the budget was not posted on the website, members of the public could have come to the MSD offices to read it, although the office is closed due to the pandemic.

Fritsche said if the public wishes to comment on the budget at the next meeting, after they’ve had a chance to see it, “they can comment during public comments at the (December) meeting, but the (official public) hearing is complete.”

Pam Boone of JM Weston Homes, which is building the Wagons West development, asked to be added to the email list so she could review the bud-

get. Fritsche said since MSD is not certifying a mill levy this year, it doesn’t need to send the budget to the state until the end of December. She said the legal requirement of holding a public hearing is being fulfilled at this meeting, and the board could adopt the budget at its Dec. 16 meeting.

The board did approve a resolution approving current rates and fees for 2021. MSD does not plan to make any changes until after the results of the rate study by GMS are reviewed in January. A schedule of fees was not included in the resolution, “I understand that document does exist,” said Fritsche.

ORC contract with Donala nearly complete

During the Oct. 21 meeting, the board discussed contracting with Donala Water and Sanitation District for access to an operator in responsible charge (ORC). See <https://ocn.me/v20n11.htm#msd>.

**Background:** Since July, MSD has lost District Manager Mike Wicklund and Interim District Manager Erin Krueger. This means ORC day-to-day tasks have been largely completed by GMS Inc., MSD’s consulting engineer, but this is not sustainable. See [www.ocn.me/v20n10.htm#msd](http://www.ocn.me/v20n10.htm#msd).

During a review of Donala’s draft proposal, Kronick said there seemed to be a 10% overhead charge in addition to the base fees. “If you can’t tell me the specific amount, that bothers me,” she said. Reisig said, “Tell me what it will cost bottom line.”

Board members seemed confused about the division of labor between Donala as ORC, GMS as the district’s contract engineer, and the tasks for a possible new part-time administrator.

The board directed Fritsche to verify costs with Donala and to attach any required addendums to the contract. Ultimately the board authorized Hamilton to enter into an agreement with Donala, hopefully by Dec. 1, which will be ratified at the December meeting.

Ongoing projects

- North Monument Creek Interceptor design work is ongoing, but water return flow issues are delaying the overall project. Fritsche said \$168,000 has been allocated in the 2021 budget so that MSD can pay its share of the design costs, which equates to 5% to 6% of the total design.
- Boone said the Wagons West development is going gangbusters, but she also asked who she would pay for a tap fee. Hamilton asked her to send him an email to coordinate this.
- Willow Springs needs to submit drawings for review by GMS.
- GMS is due to deliver the rates and fees study in January or February.

Coping with no district manager

- Howe asked what to do about the district manager’s office. “Having looked at Mike and Erin’s job descriptions, there are a lot of blanks there that need to be filled,” he said. Fritsche suggested that former employees could come in to assist.
- In addition to COVID-19 restrictions on offices being open, it appears the public doesn’t often know when the office is open to pay bills or tap fees in person since Allsup can’t always be there.
- Hamilton agreed to review the part-time administrator description and post that job at the beginning of 2021.
- Website updates have not been getting completed. “Who is running the website?” asked Howe.



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Fritsche suggested authorizing Kronick to work on how to upload information, such as the 2020 draft budget, to the MSD web page.

Howe pointed out the monthly cash flow report shows a 480% increase in administration costs. Fritsche said the unusual increase could have been caused by certified letters that were sent out to delinquent accounts.

Timing of biggest invoices

Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility (TLWWTF) Manager Bill Burks attended the meeting briefly to clear up invoicing issues the MSD has had since Wicklund and Krueger have been gone. At the Oct. 21 meeting, MSD discussed a late \$8,000 check that is part of its monthly invoice to the TLWWTF. See [www.ocn.me/v20n11.htm#msd](http://www.ocn.me/v20n11.htm#msd), [www.ocn.me/v20n11.htm#tlwffuc](http://www.ocn.me/v20n11.htm#tlwffuc).

Burks attended the meeting to answer the board's questions about

the quick turnaround time for large monthly invoices due to TLWWTF for wastewater treatment costs.

Instead of holding large cash reserves from MSD, Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, and Palmer Lake Sanitation District, the TLWWTF Joint Use Committee voted in March 2017 to use a two-invoice system. Each district is billed by the third day of each month, using estimated amounts for incoming bills and for regular monthly budgeted items such as payroll. Then a second invoice is sent to each district based on the remaining actual amounts. These two invoices are approved by the JUC at the regular meetings each month, and the districts are expected to promptly pay their shares. See [www.ocn.me/v17n4.htm#tlwffuc](http://www.ocn.me/v17n4.htm#tlwffuc),

Executive session on personnel

The board went into executive ses-

sion at 10:21 a.m. to discuss a personnel issue 24-6-402. The Oct. 21 minutes were not approved as is normally done at the beginning of the meeting as Hamilton said he wished to discuss them in this executive session. However, when the session was announced, he only mentioned the personnel matter. Note: This is an issue with special district laws as all relevant discussion topics must be announced before the session. It is unclear if the board intended to discuss the minutes or not.

According to Fritsche, upon completion of the executive session, the board adjourned and no decisions

were made.

\*\*\*\*\*

Monument Sanitation District meetings are normally 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 Dec. 16 at 9 a.m. See <https://colorado.gov/msd>. For a district service map, see <https://colorado.gov/pacific/msd/district-map-0>. Information: 481-4886.

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

Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, Nov. 16

Public hearing on budget held

By James Howald

The Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) board held its November meeting at the Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) Barn Community Center. The details of this meeting will be reported, along with the January board meeting, in the January issue of Our Community News.

\*\*\*\*\*

The next meeting is scheduled for Dec. 14 at 1 p.m. Meetings are usu-

ally held on the second Monday of each month at 1 p.m. The November meeting was delayed a week to allow the board members to study the proposed budget. Meetings are currently held at the Woodmoor Barn Community Center rather than the district office; please see [www.woodmoorwater.com](http://www.woodmoorwater.com) or call 488-2525 to verify meeting times and locations.

James Howald can be reached at [jameshowald@ocn.me](mailto:jameshowald@ocn.me).

Monument Board of Trustees, Nov. 9

Willow Springs Ranch approved for infrastructure buildout

By Allison Robenstein

During a special meeting held Nov. 9, the Monument Board of Trustees (BOT) approved a land use request and the final plat of Willow Springs Ranch Filing No. 1 and discussed the 2021 budget.

Nov. 3 election results for the Town of Monument

Ballot issue 2E (increasing local sales and use tax from 3% to 3.5%):

Yes, 2,643 (42.57%)

No, 3,565 (57.43%)

Ballot question 2F (changing the election schedule):

Yes, 3,711 (62.57%)

No, 2,220 (37.43%)

Willow Springs Ranch approved to begin building

Willow Springs Ranch is a 109-acre development on the west side of town north of Baptist Road. The 372 lots and 16 streets will sit along one main route that connects Mitchell Avenue at the north end and Forest Lakes Drive on the south.

The land was annexed into the town in 2019, although at that time there were concerns that not all the homes could be supplied with water. See <https://www.ocn.me/v18n4.htm#mbot0319> and <https://www.ocn.me/v18n11.htm#mbot>. Public Works Director Tom Tharnish said the town has enough water to service 300 homes now. A new well is being dug to supply water for the rest of the homes.

The Monument Planning Commission approved the request at its Oct. 14 meeting with the condition that fencing design should be consid-

ered by the developer, Willow Springs Ranch LLC. The commission also recommended parking restrictions on main thoroughfares. See <https://www.ocn.me/v20n11.htm#mpc>.



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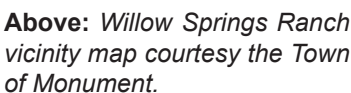
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## New Day Cottages





Wilson asked how many houses will be built next year. McConnell said infrastructure should be built by the spring or summer with the antici-

- Employees will receive a 5% cost-of-living salary adjustment. Medical benefits will be through Kaiser once again, with a 1.4% decrease in premiums. There is no change in premium costs for dental and vision benefits.

- General Fund revenue is expected to be \$6.488 million for 2021. In the draft budget, expenses currently exceed revenues, which may be due to project estimates versus actual costs.
- The largest number of new projects will be in Public Works using an infusion of \$22 million from the sale of debt. This fund will be the conduit through which this money is funneled to pay for projects. These include a new water tank and pipeline, and booster station upgrade. For a complete list of these projects, see <https://www.ocn.me/v20n10.htm#mbot>.
- The Capital Projects Fund will include \$800,000 in grant money for Jackson Creek Parkway improvements.
- The Community Development

*Allison Robenstein  
can be reached at  
allisonrobenstein@ocn.me.*

# Newest well will bring in additional ground water

Trustee Jamy Unruh had been present at the beginning of the meeting but had technical difficulties that prevented her from participating or voting.

Mayor Don Wilson confirmed this well will be a temporary replacement for Well 9, which has been experiencing

Resident Ann Howe asked why the budget restatement had not been made public before the meeting. However, the board packet was available last week, before the meeting, and Ooms said the

During discussions, Clark said, "I commend Mrs. Ooms for the great way she has revamped our systems in the accounting department and the ways that she has made better

*Allison Robenstein  
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# Public hearing on 2021 budget held

At the Nov.12 meeting, the board held the public hearing

for the town's 2021 budget. The trustees heard an update on the project to rebuild the ramp to the town's library and heard a presentation on how the town's Yule Log hunt would be redesigned to address concerns about the COVID-19 virus. The board voted on four resolutions and four ordinances to wrap up issues that had been debated in previous

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meetings and to clear the way for the new board just elected in November. Finally, the board promoted a member of the Palmer Lake Police Department (PLPD) and granted a business license.

**Budget hearing held; 2021 budget ready to be filed with state**

Town Administrator and Clerk Dawn Collins opened the hearing by thanking Interim Town Administrator Bob Radosevich and Deputy Town Clerk Julia Stambaugh for their work on the budget and said a final version of the budget would be filed with the state in December.

Radosevich gave the board a quick summary of highlights and changes in the 2021 budget, including:

- An increase from \$500,000 to \$600,000 in the estimated revenue from sales taxes.
- A large increase in capital improvements funding to rehabilitate the Living Word Church building that was donated to the town.
- Funds added to pay for repair work needed on the Town Hall.
- An increase in workers compensation funding for all departments—2 percent for some departments and 5 percent for others.
- An increase in the wages for full-time firefighters.
- An increase in the roads budget of \$98,000 to fund needed roadwork.
- \$5,000 for repair work at the existing fire station.

Radosevich added that the new board could amend the budget on Dec. 10 if they choose to do so.

There were no comments from the public or the board.

**Design for library ramp completed**

At the October board meetings, Radosevich told the board that he had not received any bids on the ramp construction project because companies wanted to see a design on which to base their bids, and that he was working with a company to prepare a design.

At the Nov. 12 meeting, Radosevich told the board that Wells and West General Contractors (WWGC) had submitted a proposal for the ramp design, with the stipulation that WWGC would also do the ramp construction. The WWGC proposal specified \$6,756 for the design, \$3,000 for soil testing and permitting and a maximum of \$90,000 for actual construction for a total of \$98,756.

Radosevich said the Pikes Peak Library District appreciated the work the town had done on the ramp project. Trustee Mark Schuler asked Radosevich if the library district had made a commitment to reopen the library when the ramp is constructed. Radosevich answered the library district had budgeted funds for rent on the building and was excited about returning to Palmer Lake.

Trustee Susan Miner pointed out that the cost of the WWGC proposal was low and that she thought it would be counterproductive to delay the project by trying to find a lower cost bid.

The consensus of the board was to authorize Radosevich to continue with the WWGC proposal.

**Yule Log hunt redesigned due to virus concerns**

Niall Byrnes, speaking on behalf of the Yule Log Committee, filled the board in on changes made to the traditional event to keep participants safe from COVID-19.

Byrne told the board that the Yule Log hunt had been held in Palmer Lake for the last 87 years. This year, he said,

the traditional dinner held before the hunt would not take place and the traditional celebration would be simplified. The singing, storytelling, and celebration of the finder of the log would not take place, Byrne said.

The Yule Log will be hidden and there will be a bugle call to start the search at 1 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 13, and another when the log is found, Byrne said. The log will be returned using a UTV or personal vehicle rather than being pulled by participants. Masks will be required, and Byrne asked anyone not feeling well to skip the event.

Byrne asked the board to allow the use of the Town Hall kitchen and restrooms for the hunt. Wassail will be served in disposable cups outside the Town Hall. He said the COVID-19 level in El Paso County at the time of the celebration will determine the number of participants that can attend the outdoor event. The hunt will take place with proper social distancing in mind, he said.

The log will be burned in barrels outside, Byrne said, adding he would meet with the town's fire chief to ensure the safety of this portion of the celebration.

Social media will be used to notify the public of details of the event, Byrne said. The Palmer Lake Yule Log group on Facebook will provide details.

Trustee Susan Miner asked Byrne if the hunt could be videotaped, and Byrne answered yes. Trustee Glant Havenar told Byrne she was glad to hear the tradition would be maintained since the town's children had given up so much already due to the pandemic.

**Board votes on housekeeping resolutions**

Resolution 19-2020 authorizes a Memo of Understanding between the town and the Tri-Lakes Disc Golf Club that specifies that members of the club will take over maintenance of the disc golf course from the Palmer Lakes Parks Commission in exchange for the fees charged to use the course.

The board voted unanimously to approve the resolution, with the condition that a clause be added forbidding disc golf players to cross the railroad tracks to access the course.

Resolution 20-2020 defines policies to regulate the use of the town's electronic sign on Highway 105, specifying the sign will be used for government news, meeting announcements, public safety warnings and public emergency information regarding fire, parking, or traffic.

Town staff will oversee the content and program the sign. Any proposed content will be provided to town staff two weeks prior to the date of display via a form. The staff has the right to deny requests depending on available space and the content provided.

The board voted unanimously to approve Resolution 20-2020.

Resolution 21-2020 authorizes the Palmer Lake Fire Department (PLFD) to accept the donation of an ambulance. Fire Chief Christopher McCarthy told the board the ambulance was a 2007 type 1 ambulance with 80,000 miles, donated by Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD). McCarthy said the PLFD was looking for a refurbished stretcher and would need to staff the ambulance.

Trustee Schuler thanked BFFRPD for the donation and applauded McCarthy for his diligence in finding solutions for the town.

The board voted unanimously to approve Resolution 21-2020.

Resolution 22-2020 authorizes the town to adopt the revised employee handbook distributed to the board in October. It was approved unanimously.

ly.

**Board addresses four ordinances**

Ordinance 16-2020, relating to raising chickens within the town boundaries, and Ordinance 19-2020, relating to keeping goats within town boundaries, were both approved by the board. The ordinances were the result of lengthy debates in previous months.

Ordinance 16-2020 specifies a minimum of 3 square feet of space in the coop and eight square feet of outside space for each chicken. The board voted unanimously to approve this ordinance.

Ordinance 19-2020 specifies at least 100 square feet of open space per goat, the open space being at least 25 feet from any residence or other building. Trustee Schuler voted no; all other trustees voted to approve.

Ordinance 18-2020, which would replot a portion of Hermosa Creek, was tabled until the next board meeting on Dec. 10

Ordinance 17-2020 concludes a lengthy discussion of vacating the town's right of way on a portion of Eaton Road. The board voted unanimously to approve the ordinance.

**Police sergeant promoted to lieutenant**

Sgt. Adam Lundy of the Palmer Lake Police Department (PLPD) was promoted to lieutenant. Police Chief Jason Vanderpool administered Lundy's oath of office.

**Business license granted**

The board unanimously approved a

business license for Tri County Construction Services at 677 B Highway 105. Owner Donavon Johnson told the board his company does commercial and residential remodeling work, as well as minor repairs, concrete work, and skid loader work.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Board of Trustees is scheduled to hold one meeting in December, on Dec. 10 at 6 p.m. at Town Hall, 42 Valley Crescent. Meetings are normally held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. Information: 481-2953.

James Howald can be reached at [jameshowald@ocn.me](mailto:jameshowald@ocn.me).

Jackie Burhans can be reached at [jackieburhans@ocn.me](mailto:jackieburhans@ocn.me).

**A proposed rezoning that should be of concern to all Black Forest and Tri-Lakes Residents**

The owner of 12740 Black Forest Rd has requested rezoning from Agricultural (A-5) to Commercial (CC-5) to accommodate 12,300 sq. ft. of office buildings built specifically for a wholesale-only commercial business. This rezoning is not about "mixed use development." It would create a dangerous precedent and potentially open a floodgate of commercial rezoning requests.

If that happens, the next step could be annexation of Black Forest by the City of Colorado Springs enticed by the prospect of higher commercial property tax revenues. You might think annexation couldn't happen, but Colorado Springs has already taken much of the land bordering Black Forest and has studied annexing Black Forest many times.

The more voices of opposition, the stronger the case against rezoning. Voice your opposition NOW. This zoning change is already in review and county planners will be making their recommendation to the Planning Commission in the coming weeks.

Email county planner Rad Dickson at [raddickson@elpasoco.com](mailto:raddickson@elpasoco.com) or send to Rad Dickson, c/o El Paso County Planning and Community Development, 2880 International Cir, Suite 110, Colorado Springs CO 80910.



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Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, Nov. 17

# 2021 budget disagreements may see a loss of a chief position

*By Allison Robenstein*  
The Donald Wescott Fire Protection District held a regular meeting on Nov. 17 during which the board reviewed the draft budget and got updates on current projects. A special meeting was held Nov. 12 for an executive session. No decisions were made during or after that meeting.  
Director Joyce Hartung was excused.

**Nov. 3 election results:**  
**Ballot Issue 6B** (allow Donald Wescott Fire Protection District to increase or decrease mill levies):  
**Yes/For 3,663 (62.36%)**  
No/Against 2,211 (37.64%)  
**Ballot Issue 6C** (allow Donald Wescott Fire Protection Northern Subdistrict to increase or decrease mill levies):  
**Yes/For 3,568 (62.7%)**  
No/Against 2,123 (37.30%)

**Budget 2021**  
Chief Vinny Burns reviewed the draft 2021 budget with the board in preparation for its Dec. 1 public hearing. Administrative Assistant Stacey Popovich said the budget is prepared using the 7.15% residential property tax rate.  
One point of contention surrounded part-time salaries, a new accounting category in next year's budget. Specifically, board Chairman Mark Gunderman was concerned about Assistant Chief Jim McBride's ongoing work with the district in creating an education program. "I'm questioning if a district our size needs a fourth person with a chief rank after we just approved a new organizational structure," Gunderman said. He said he would rather see the money go into additional overtime budget because of uncertainties. "If 2020 has taught us nothing it's that we don't know what to expect."  
This year, the district restructured the ranks, creating three battalion chief positions in addition to Burns' rank.  
Originally, the position was exempt, but Burns said McBride will work hourly now.

Director Duane Garrett said the district has had this discussion in the past. Because we have battalion chiefs who are handling training, this position is unnecessary, he said.  
Burns said many of the programs used today have been due to McBride's work. "He has a high level of fire service knowledge and has been priceless as a tutor and mentor." Garrett asked for specific measurements upon which Burns could prove his case, saying they are using multiple educational platforms whereas before they had none.  
Gunderman said, "I have a hard time looking at my neighbors paying for [a] chief who is 2,000 miles away." McBride lives on the East Coast. There was no conclusion, but the topic will be on the table during the public hearing on Dec. 1.  
Burns said due to the pandemic many classes and workshops have been cancelled or have moved to virtual, so the training budget was decreased.  
Burns said he would like to concentrate on smaller projects to be paid for through the reserve funds including new radios, more gear for firefighters, and some facility repairs. No new apparatus is being budgeted. He also warned the board it should begin saving for Station 1, which will need a remodel soon, and Station 3, built in 1981, which should be torn down and rebuilt.  
Gunderman said the bottom line is that the reserves need to remain between \$900,000 and \$1.2 million as they had all agreed.  
**Chief's report**

- Firefighter George Laugesen is one of four paramedic students. He has met all the necessary requirements and will be promoted to paramedic this year.
- There were 78 calls for service with zero fire loss in October. This is an 11% increase over October 2019 calls. Secretary Larry Schwarz asked about the 15 calls that showed units were returned to

quarters before arrival on scene. Burns said these calls were automatic aid. Because the home department got to the call first, and determined no other companies were required, these units turned around. Schwarz, who has been a proponent of more staff per rig, asked how manpower is tracked per truck. Lt. Jason Chavez said data is only tracked in the narrative of the report and would not be easily queried. For example, if a paramedic gives a patient medication, they typically leave their rig to ride in the ambulance with the patient to the hospital.

- The November chief's report will include fire loss. "There were back-to-back significant calls," along Highway 83 that included a fire from a multiple vehicle crash and a fatality. Burns said the team handling these calls was, "extremely professional" noting it was one of the more horrific scenes the firefighters have encountered. "Words can't describe the damage to some of those vehicles," he said.
- Chief Shannon Balvanz confirmed the Federal Emergency Management Agency grant request has been officially approved. This money will pay for a vehicle exhaust removal system in all three stations. The state will pay \$124,857, and Wescott's out-of-pocket expense will be \$6,000. The project is expected to begin in December. Schwarz suggested the stations should be decontaminated before the work starts, but this wasn't in the 2020 budget. Burns said he will try to prepare costs and pull the money from reserves.

- Chavez said a new life pack, which was also paid for using grant funding, has been in service for two weeks. The state is reimbursing the district for the unit, and Chavez expects the money in the next few weeks.
- Santa on Patrol will happen on Dec. 12, weather permitting. The backup date will be Saturday, Dec. 19.
- Burns thanked a resident who kindly brought meals for all three shifts. He said the Greek and Mediterranean influenced cooking was much appreciated and delicious. A previous Antelope Trails student made the district a poster thanking them for their service. Burns said due to the pandemic, her tour was postponed.
- Regarding COVID-19, Burns said it is "spreading like crazy around the community and we are doing everything we can to keep it out of the station." Anyone coming on duty must first answer a questionnaire using an app on their phones.

The meeting adjourned at 5:57 p.m.  
\*\*\*\*\*  
The next Donald Wescott fire district meeting is scheduled for Jan. 19 at 4 p.m. If the meeting is held in person, it will be at Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Dr. For a virtual meeting, the phone number is 669-900-9128, and the meeting code is 980 378 2073. Meetings are usually on the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. For information, call Executive Administrator Stacey Popovich at 719-488-8680 or see [www.wescottfire.org](http://www.wescottfire.org).  
*Allison Robenstein can be reached at [allisonrobenstein@ocn.me](mailto:allisonrobenstein@ocn.me).*

## Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, Nov. 18

# Fire chief final candidates announced; COVID-19 report

*By Natalie Barszcz*  
At the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) board meeting held via Zoom on Nov. 18, the board heard the final candidate selection for fire chief, heard a COVID-19 update, and presented the proposed draft 2021 budget to the public.  
Vice President Roger Lance, Secretary Mike Smaldino, and Director Tom Tharnish were excused.  
**Fire chief job description**  
Fire Chief Chris Truty said that eight changes were made to the fire chief job description that were initially motivated by the chief profiles provided by Prothman consultant Mark Risen. See [www.ocn.me/v20n10.htm#tlmfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v20n10.htm#tlmfpd). The board moved to approve the changes to the fire chief job description as presented, 4-0.  
**Fire chief candidates**  
Fire Chief Search Committee member/board President John Hildebrandt announced the final six candidates for the position of fire chief:

- Kristopher Blume of Tucson, AZ
- Jimmy Bumgarner Jr. of Monument, CO
- Mark Ellis of Wellington, FL
- Kenneth Harrison of Trabuco Canyon, CA
- Andy Kovacs of Loveland, CO
- Scott Robb of Oro Valley, AZ

Hildebrandt made a motion to declare the six finalists for the fire chief position.

tion. The board unanimously approved the finalists, 4-0.  
Hildebrandt said the final candidates will attend 30-minute in-person interviews at the Chamber of Commerce office at 166 Second St. with the full board and the Prothman representative on Dec. 5. The district will cover the travel expenses for each candidate.  
The interviews are open to the public and due to COVID-19 will be available electronically either via live YouTube or Facebook stream. For joining instructions visit [www.tlmfire.org](http://www.tlmfire.org).  
Before the interview process, the full board will receive summary reports from the six-member district staff panel (three representing the administration and three representing the union) from the interviews conducted online from Nov. 19-21 with each candidate. At the completion of all the interviews, the full board will decide whether to select a candidate, postpone a decision, or choose another option, said Hildebrandt.  
**COVID-19 update**  
Truty said that he listens to a weekly COVID-19 call with El Paso County public health officials and the Office of Emergency Management, and he gave the following update:

- Hospital staffing shortages are high within the state and although the mortality rate is decreasing

TLMFPD (Cont. on 16)



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\*Classic Homes Smart Connection Package is included in new construction homes effective 11/9/19. Package offerings and included products and components are subject to change without notice. Smart Home Connection Package does not apply to homes started prior to 11/9/19. Additional restrictions may apply; See Classic New Home Specialists for complete details. All company, product and service names used by Classic Homes are for identification purposes only. Use of these names, logos, and brands does not imply endorsement. Google and Google Nest are trademarks of Google LLC. Amazon, Echo, Alexa, Ring and all related logos are trademarks of Amazon.com, Inc. or its affiliates.





TLMFPD (Cont. from 14)

- and is nowhere near what it was in the spring, hospitals are close to being overwhelmed and other counties have already reached that point.
- Cost and reimbursements for possible long-distance EMS transportations of COVID-19 patients, should hospitals become overwhelmed, have yet to be addressed. Transportations would not reduce the district's frontline response and would need to be fully reimbursed.
  - The Monument COVID-19 testing site has closed due to the needs exceeding the capacity of an available parking lot.
  - The Northern El Paso County drive-through testing site has now moved to Pikes Peak Community College Rampart Range campus at 2070 Interquest Parkway, southeast of the campus. See [www.elpasocountyhealth.org/covid-19-testing-information](http://www.elpasocountyhealth.org/covid-19-testing-information).
  - The TLMFPD offices are open from 8 to noon daily with the majority of staff working remotely from home.
  - All multi-agency training has been suspended until further notice due to COVID-19 protocols.
  - All family visits are prohibited at all three TLMFPD fire stations until further notice in an effort to limit the spread of COVID-19.

Truty said the first round of a two-shot series of approved vaccines will likely be distributed by mid- to late December, and Colorado will likely receive about 150,000 doses for health care workers, first responders and long-term care employees. The major distribution of vaccines for the general population is expected in spring, said Truty. *COVID-19 updates and information can be found at <https://covid19.colorado.gov/>.*

Proposed 2021 budget—public hearing

Truty said there were no changes to the third and final review of the proposed draft 2021 budget and said the following:

- Total budgeted revenue remains at \$11.43 million.
- Total budgeted operating expenses remain at \$9.11 million.
- Total budgeted capital expenses remain at \$2.71 million.

The 2021 budget is scheduled for final approval at the Dec. 2 board meeting.

Hildebrandt moved to open a public hearing for the approval of the proposed 2021 budget. Hearing no one speaking in favor of, or opposed to, and no testimony, Hildebrandt moved to close the public hearing, and the board approved the motion 4-0.

Amended 2020 budget

Truty said the 2020 projected numbers in the budget have been updated based on expenditures through the end of October as follows:

- Projected revenue was increased from \$11.39 million to \$11.50 million, an increase of \$117,500.
- Projected operating expenses were increased from \$8,406,746 to \$8,441,345, an increase of \$34,599.
- Projected capital expenses were unchanged at \$1,095,000.

Including funds intentionally set aside for reserves of \$460,937 and excluding funds moved from 2020 to 2021 gives the district about a \$750,000 projected surplus. Most of this surplus can be attributed to COVID-19 changes and altered personnel expectations, said Truty.

Truty said that although a unanimous motion to approve the 2020 amended budget was carried last month, the Department of Local Affairs had since requested a resolution format requiring a roll call vote be taken before the 2020 amended budget could be filed with the state.

Hildebrandt led a motion for the board to adopt Resolution 2020-05, the 2020 amended budget, summarizing expenditures and revenues for each fund and adopting an amended budget for TLMFPD for the calendar year 2020. The roll call vote was carried unanimously, 4-0.

Financial report

Treasurer Jason Buckingham said the following:

- The October financial report represents 83.3% of the budget for the year to date.
- Overall revenues for the year are \$10.97 million year to date.
- Specific Ownership Taxes and Impact Fees are still making positive gains and are predicted to surpass budget estimates.
- Ambulance revenue and property taxes should meet expectations.

Buckingham said the district finances are in very good shape with overall expenses at \$7.01 million year to date of the \$9.34 million predicted annual budget.

In October, 16 electronic payments were reviewed and all appeared to be appropriate and within budget. The district had large expenses in October for annual physicals at \$17,050 and made a payment of \$11,249 to Prothman for consulting fees for the fire chief search.

Chief's report

Truty said the following:

- The National Weather Service has predicted the long-term weather forecast throughout the winter to be dry with some periods of snow, and for

the next 90 days we will be in a tough wildland fire season.

- The El Paso County Sheriff's Office is developing an arson investigation collaboration group and Fire Marshal Jamey Bumgarner is part of that county-wide team. TLMFPD is one of a handful of departments that have an investigation team. The aim is to enhance fire investigation response across the county.
- Due to COVID-19, the district declined an invitation to attend a D38 public safety recognition event for first responders in an effort to remain isolated.
- The Station 1 remodel plan is moving along and close to being finalized with a brand-new plan since purchasing the neighboring land. See [www.ocn.me/v20n5.htm#tlmfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v20n5.htm#tlmfpd) and [www.ocn.me/v20n10.htm#tlmfire.org](http://www.ocn.me/v20n10.htm#tlmfire.org).

Deputy Chief Randy Trost said that talks during the Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management Annual Winter Weather Workshop has improved coordination between agencies on when to call out snowplows and salt trucks and close roads during winter storms. Progress is being made, and the next step is to hold another meeting to determine who will make immediate decisions during winter weather advisories.

Santa on Patrol

Bumgarner announced that TLMFPD is excited to assist in the Annual Monument Police Department "Santa on Patrol" event this year.

Bumgarner said the event would be scaled down this year due to COVID-19, and the gifts will be distributed to individual households on Dec. 19. If you know a family in need that would benefit from this event, visit: [www.townofmonument.gov.org](http://www.townofmonument.gov.org).

Unwrapped new toys and gift cards should be dropped off no later than Friday, Dec. 14, at 3 p.m. at the Monument Police Department, 645 Beacon Lite Road or at Marine ToysforTots donation boxes throughout the Tri-Lakes region. Due to COVID-19, ToysforTots donations will not be accepted at TLMFPD fire stations. For more information visit: [www.townofmonument.org](http://www.townofmonument.org).

The meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday of each month. The next regular meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Dec. 2 via Zoom. For information on joining the Zoom meeting instructions and upcoming agendas, visit [www.tlmfire.org/board](http://www.tlmfire.org/board) or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

Natalie Barszcz can be reached at [nataliebarszcz@ocn.me](mailto:nataliebarszcz@ocn.me).

Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District, Nov. 18

Residents petition for exclusion; proposed 2021 budget gets public hearing

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD) board meeting Nov. 18 via Zoom, Colorado Springs residents discussed submitting their petitions for exclusion from BFFRPD with the board, and the fire chief discussed updates to the proposed 2021 budget during a public hearing.

Petitions for exclusion

Fire Chief PJ Langmaid said a resolution for a policy to handle petitions of exclusion that do not involve another government entity had been drafted by the district's legal counsel and presented to the board for consideration just before the Nov. 18 board meeting.

**Note:** In early November, Langmaid posted an update on the district website to the residents in the southern tip of BFFRPD, north of Woodmen Road, who are currently subject to dual fire district taxation. The update refers to a possible timeline for the completion of the exclusion process and the recent discovery of a miscalculation made in 2017 that led the district to believe it would recover from the lost revenue in two years. The anticipated loss of revenue will now be much higher than previously thought when the homes are finally excluded from the district. The homes were annexed into Colorado Springs Fire Department when Station 21 opened in Aug. 2013. See [www.bffire.org](http://www.bffire.org) and [www.ocn.me/v20n8.htm#bffire](http://www.ocn.me/v20n8.htm#bffire).

Chairman Rick Nearhoof said the board had received a resolution for a policy for the handling of petitions for exclusion and that he and likely the other board members had not experienced a petition for exclusion before. The board would need three weeks to review the policy, said Nearhoof, and he made a motion to table resolution 2020-12 until Dec. 9. The board approved the decision 5-0.

During public comment, Colorado Springs resident Joel Helzer spoke on behalf of the Colorado Springs residents who are requesting the board ap-

prove the notarized petitions for the exclusion of 22 additional homes and 40 property owners that are subject to dual taxation. The residents are requesting that the petitions of exclusion be added to the existing homes already pending exclusion from BFFRPD's area of coverage.

Helzer said the following:

- He thanked the board for its time and efforts in the midst of the exclusion process.
- The residents recognize that both BFFRPD and Colorado Springs City Council have encountered difficulties working with each other during the exclusion process and the homeowners are in the middle in a tough spot.
- The residents have now come together to file Colorado Revised Statutes CRS-32-1-501 and would like to file a petition with the board according to the procedures and policies within that section.
- He asked that, given the nature of COVID-19 and the online forum of the board meetings, how would the board like to receive the petition for exclusion documents.

Langmaid recommended that the documents be mailed to the board Secretary Donna Arkowski in care of BFFRPD and then the five board members would act as hearing officers.

Treasurer Jack Hinton said the following:

- The district does not have a specific policy in place to deal with the petition right now and the board requested the district counsel draft a pol-





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- The process began in 2018 and the district did not hear anything from the City Council until July 2020.
- The exclusion process is lengthy, and all the properties need to be looked at individually.

Hinton said Helzer should wait to submit the petitions for exclusion until the policy has been reviewed by the board and the district has the chance to coordinate with the city to prevent any lapse in fire protection coverage.

Helzer said CRS-32-1-501 lays out very clear specific policy and procedures associated with this process, and it allows the board to pass a resolution directly without a policy in place, given that fire protection is already provided by the Colorado Springs Fire Department and the residents have been paying dual taxes and receiving dual coverage for seven years. The property owners are simply asking to be added to the 600-700 dual taxation residents currently pending exclusion, said Helzer.

Arkowski said the documents should be sent to the board secretary and then the process could begin.

Vice Chairman Nate Dowden concurred with Langmaid and recommended the petitions for exclusion be sent immediately to the board secretary via certified mail, but he voiced concerns regarding signing for certified mail during COVID-19 and the possibility of a missed delivery.

Langmaid agreed to coordinate a time for Helzer to hand deliver and sign for the petitions of exclusion, after which the sealed envelope would be passed unopened to the board.

Langmaid said communication between the district and Colorado Springs City Council legal office has been next to none since Nov. 3 and the pending exclusion timeline of the 392 homes is unknown, but the district should be notified once the city files the exclusion with the court.

Langmaid said he is coordinating a planning meeting between the Colorado Springs Fire Department, the Colorado Springs City Council and its legal counsel and the district's legal counsel to come up with a phased exclusion plan that incorporates the municipality and the district. See [www.bffire.org](http://www.bffire.org).

Colorado Springs dual taxation resident Colleen Murphy made a comment via Zoom chat on behalf of the dual taxation residents: "We completely understand and greatly appreciate the work of Fire Chief Langmaid."

**Note:** Langmaid joined the board in May 2014 and was elected chairman in May 2018 before resigning to become interim chief in May 2019 and the permanent chief in June 2020. Chairman Nearhoof has been a board member since May 2014, and Treasurer Jack Hinton joined the board in May 2016.

**Public presentation of the proposed 2021 budget**

Langmaid's comments on the proposed budget included:

- An increase was required to the insurance for general liability and workers compensation that has not previously been entirely accurate.
- The wage schedule has not changed since last month and will be 47.6% of the total budget for 2021.
- The General Obligation Bond will be paid in full in 2021, which will unencumber those residents still paying the bond.
- The wildland deployments during August through October generated a bill to the state for \$230,000 for expenses. The staff volunteered for the deployments, but it cannot be guaranteed as a revenue source in the future and the deployments create wear and tear on equipment.

*El Paso Board of County Commissioners, Nov. 3, 10, 17, and 24*

**Grandwood Ranch initial plans, Rollin Ridge final plat approved; Highway 105 project update**

*By Helen Walklett*

During November, the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approved rezoning and preliminary plan requests for the proposed Grandwood Ranch development north of Higby Road. The final plat application for the residential portion of the Rollin Ridge development also received approval.

**Grandwood Ranch rezone and preliminary plan**

- An additional \$30,000 was added to the proposed budget for mission-critical radios for use inside structure fires.
- The district plans to purchase 11 additional quality used Self-contained Breathing Apparatus units in the spring.
- There is no change to the Capital Improvement Fund.
- Electricity is budgeted less for Station 1 in 2021 now that the radio tower and the training facility are tracked separately.

Hinton said the district is in the early planning stages of a possible lease/purchase for up to three large apparatus units, and the board's decision to move forward on the request for proposals will depend on the economy and COVID-19. The potential purchase is part of the strategic plan to create uniformity in the pump capacities on firefighting apparatus. See [www.ocn.me/v20n11.htm#bffrpd](http://www.ocn.me/v20n11.htm#bffrpd).

The 2021 budget in its final form is scheduled to be approved at the Dec. 9 board meeting, said Nearhoof.

**Chief's report**

Langmaid said the following:

- There has been an uptick in COVID-19 calls within the Black Forest community.
- The BFFRPD Palmer Ridge Regional Training Center at Station 1 is now fully operational, and area fire departments have also had the opportunity to use the facility for live fire training.
- The training division is researching a professional six-to-eight-week Fire Academy course for 2021, which could potentially include other partner agencies.

**SHIELD616 fundraiser**

Langmaid said that despite the bitter cold and social distancing, the department managed to pull off a spectacular event for donors who raised money for the SHIELD616 equipment fundraiser in September. SHIELD616 founder/President Jake Skifstad presented a full armor package to each BFFRPD staff member, and KOAA News 5 covered the event on the evening of Nov. 12, outside the bay at Station 1.

Based in Black Forest, SHIELD616 is a national nonprofit that raises money for protective equipment for police officers and fire departments. Langmaid said he suspects there will be a good relationship between BFFRPD and SHIELD616 for many years to come.

Nearhoof thanked SHIELD616 for its dedication to the fire and police services, and the district definitely appreciates the donation of the equipment. See [www.ocn.me/v20n10.htm#bffire](http://www.ocn.me/v20n10.htm#bffire).

**Cell tower property access**

Nearhoof said he had met with property owner Richard Painter to discuss concerns regarding access to his property and the BFFRPD repeater cell tower on Swan Road. No-trespassing signs will be posted on his property, and permission will need to be granted for access to his property.

**Inaccuracies addressed**

Langmaid said numerous inaccuracies had occurred in OCN's November edition that were likely due to COVID-19 distancing during the recording of the meeting, and he noted the following:

- No clubhouse has yet been built in Flying Horse North, however, there is a proposal.
- No state law dictates developers install 30,000-gallon cisterns, however, there is a provision in the county's land development code to address structural firefighting water.
- Classic Homes and the district did reach an understanding for a fair and reasonable amount for impact fees specifically within Flying Horse North, should the county agree, which it has not,

and there was no binding agreement. See the Jan.15, 2020 board minutes at [www.bffire.org](http://www.bffire.org). Langmaid said the engine that makes the region and nation strong is the economy, and developers are an integral part of that economy. "Classic Homes is a valued leader in the region and they are good partners, and my office and Classic Homes work great together to jointly solve problems through respectful and meaningful dialogue, even though we do not always agree," said Langmaid.

My office and Classic Homes have collaborated on several projects to improve public safety, but that does not mean there is not room for improvement. Things are moving forward and water issues are not uncommon in the West, and with proper planning, and if Cherokee Water District gets involved, the water issues may be resolved, said Langmaid. The meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Corrections**

In the November issue of OCN, the Oct. 21 BFFRPD article should have read:

- "Hinton meant to say: In the north part of the district we have a proposed clubhouse that is above height restrictions."
- "BFFRPD had a non-binding agreement with a developer to collect impact fees."
- "Langmaid said the county writes the land development codes that directly impact the district when it comes to water, then does not enforce the codes. He said there are hundreds of homes being sold with zero water for fire protection and there was zero accountability when he tried to "drill down" on how that could have occurred. See [www.bffire.org/files/641a7ddae/2020+Guidance+document+water+supply+v.2.pdf](http://www.bffire.org/files/641a7ddae/2020+Guidance+document+water+supply+v.2.pdf)."

The archived article is available at [www.ocn.me/v20n11.htm#bffire](http://www.ocn.me/v20n11.htm#bffire).

OCN regrets the errors.

\*\*\*\*\*

Meetings are usually held at 7 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month at BFFRPD Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Dec. 9 at 7 p.m. Due to COVID-19 social distancing, meetings will be held via Zoom until further notice. For joining instructions, updates, and minutes, visit [www.bffire.org](http://www.bffire.org).

*Natalie Barszcz can be reached at [nataliebarszcz@ocn.me](mailto:nataliebarszcz@ocn.me).*

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to RR 2.5 (residential rural). The current preliminary plan application sought approval for 48 single-family residential lots, with drainage tracts, rights-of-way, and two open space tracts. The applicant also requested approval for pre-development site grading.

As the preliminary plan application did not include a request for a finding of water sufficiency and because there are still details to be agreed upon between the county and the applicant concerning the extension of Furrow Road to Higby Road, the applicant did not request the administrative approval of final plats.

The county had received a number of emails raising concerns about the extension of Furrow Road. Jennifer Irvine, county engineer, spoke at the hearing, telling the commissioners that the extension is identified in the 2016 Major Transportation Corridors Plan update and had been in the plan since at least 1985. She described Furrow Road as a collector-type road and emphasized the importance of the extension in providing another north/south connection. She concluded, "The bottom line is that this roadway was planned and needed over 30 years ago."

As at the El Paso County Planning Commission hearing on Oct. 15, discussion focused on density transition. John Mills, the owner of three RR-5 (residential rural) lots north of the proposed development, who had spoken at the Planning Commission hearing, again called for compromise to provide a better transition between the proposed northern lots and his property. He said, "I'm only opposing this rezone if there's no compromise. I know there's compromise from existing landowners when development comes in. I get it but I also think there should be compromise the other way if there's something we can do to meet in

the middle." Mills asked that the three proposed lots abutting his property be turned into two larger lots to provide some density transition. If this were not possible, he wanted to see some sort of additional setback.

Responding, Jason Alwine, senior landscape architect at Matrix Design Group Inc., representing the developer, said he felt the developer was meeting the compatibility and transition requirement of county's code given the variety of zoning around the proposed development and the future urban development to the south.

Commissioner Stan VanderWerf said he did not feel compelled to impose any kind of condition requiring a setback on the lots in question and encouraged the developer to work with the adjacent property owner, saying, "If there's a way to accommodate the request, and I'm really referring to the 100-foot setback part of this, I think that would be wonderful."

Commissioner Longinos Gonzalez Jr. said that he felt it was not unreasonable to request an increased setback on the two lots. Commissioner Mark Waller voiced concern about mandating a setback and then finding that the topography of the lot would not allow for it. Nina Ruiz, planning manager, Planning and Community Development, suggested another approach would be to include a "building envelope," a designated buildable area, on the final plat.

Alwine then said that, in the interest of compromise, the owners would provide a 75-foot setback at the rear of the two lots so that no condition would be placed on future final plats. Waller commented that he felt there was no need to do anything at this point and that he felt the matter would be resolved. He said, "Please continue working with the adjacent landowner so we can make sure this is done as well as

possible for everybody."

Both requests were approved unanimously.

#### Rollin Ridge final plat

At their Nov. 24 meeting, the commissioners voted unanimously to approve the final plat application for 16 single-family lots at the 57-acre Rollin Ridge development at the southwest corner of the Hodgen Road and Highway 83 intersection. The application was heard as a consent item, meaning there was no discussion. The Planning Commission voted to recommend it for approval at its meeting on Nov. 5.

The rezoning and preliminary plan applications for the site were approved by the BOCC in July 2019. The development includes a commercial part that was not part of this final plat application; it will come forward as a separate final plat application at some point in the future.

#### Highway 105 project

While attending the Nov. 10 meeting for the Grandwood Ranch application, Jennifer Irvine, county engineer, took the opportunity to provide an update on the Highway 105 project. She said, "We have two projects along that corridor that are underway and under design phase right now: I-25 to Lake Woodmoor [Drive], which will improve Highway 105 to four lanes, and Project B, Lake Woodmoor to Highway 83 and we will be improving that section not to four lanes but two lanes and also completing shoulders and other safety improvements along that roadway."

She explained that improvements along that section of the highway would include turn lanes and, in some locations, signals. She said, "We are looking at monitoring Lake Woodmoor [Drive]. I anticipate at some point in the future that will be either signalized or, in the interim, we will be doing signal turn lane improvements at that location."

She anticipates signaling the Furrow Road and Roller Coaster Road intersections at some point in the future.

#### 2021 budget

At their Nov. 17 meeting, the commissioners gave their final direction on the 2021 budget, which totals about \$403 million. They agreed to allocate a further \$15,000 to Planning and Community Development for code enforcement clean-up projects. This left \$245,000 in the fund balance which the commissioners directed should be kept in reserve for now in case additional funds are needed for COVID response. Should the funds not be needed for this, they can be appropriated in the future for a different purpose by the BOCC. The commissioners are likely to decide this at a meeting in April or May of next year.

The budget is now scheduled to be adopted at the Dec. 8 BOCC meeting.

#### Johnson subdivision waiver

At the Nov. 10 meeting, the commissioners unanimously approved a request by Delroy and Janet Johnson for a waiver of certain subdivision regulations under the county's land development code to allow them to provide safe, private access to three proposed new lots on their property. The request was heard as a consent item, meaning there was no discussion. A minor subdivision application will now follow to enable the Johnsons to create four lots on their 29-acre property on Highway 83, slightly north of its intersection with Old North Gate Road.

The application was heard by the Planning Commission at its Oct. 15 meeting and unanimously recommended for approval. See [https://www.ocn.me/v20n11.htm?zoom\\_highlight=delroy](https://www.ocn.me/v20n11.htm?zoom_highlight=delroy).

Helen Walklett can be reached at [helenwalklett@ocn.me](mailto:helenwalklett@ocn.me).

*El Paso County Planning Commission, Nov. 5 and 19*

## Rollin Ridge final plat recommended for approval; residential development proposed on Benet Hill Monastery land

*By Helen Walklett*

During November, the El Paso County Planning Commission recommended for approval a final plat request for the residential portion of the Rollin Ridge development at the southwest corner

of the Hodgen Road and Highway 83 intersection. The commissioners also recommended for approval rezoning and preliminary plan applications by Benet Hill Monastery to allow the development of 26 attached single-family

residential lots on land it owns adjacent to the monastery.

#### Rollin Ridge final plat

At their Nov. 5 meeting, the commissioners voted unanimously to recommend for approval the final plat ap-

plication for Rollin Ridge to create 16 single-family lots, a tract for storm water quality and detention, a tract to be held for future commercial development, and right-of-way at the 57-acre property at the southwest corner of the Hodgen Road and Highway 83 intersection. The lots will be a minimum of 2.5 acres.

The application was scheduled to be heard as a consent item, meaning it would not receive a full hearing, but Commissioner Tim Trowbridge requested that it be heard as a regular item to hear of changes that had occurred since the last hearing and for the benefit of newer Planning Commission members.

The rezoning and preliminary plan applications for the site were approved by the El Paso Board of County Commissioners in July 2019. Those applications included the commercial use part of the site. This final plat application concerns only the residential portion. See <https://www.ocn.me/v19n8.htm#epbocc>.

David Jones of Land Resource Associates, on behalf of the applicant, told the commissioners that the lots and road layouts had not changed since the preliminary plan application with the exception of the entrance, where improvements had been made. He also provided an overview of the site's drainage.



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COUNTY PC (Cont. on 20)



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COUNTY PC (Cont. from 18)

The commissioners voted unanimously to recommend the application for approval. It was then heard at the BOCC meeting on Nov. 24. See the BOCC article on page 17.

Sanctuary of Peace residential community

At the Nov. 19 Planning Commission hearing, the commissioners heard requests by Benet Hill Monastery for the rezoning from RR-5 (residential rural) and A-5 (agricultural) to PUD (planned unit development) to allow the development of 26 attached residential lots and a lot to be used as a business event center for the monastery on land adjacent to it. The private event center would be for the exclusive use of residents, their guests, and the sisters of the monastery.

The proposed development, to be known as Sanctuary of Peace Residential Community, would be built on a 49.5-acre parcel of land north of Stagecoach Road, south of Benet Lane, east of Roller Coaster Road, and west of Highway 83. The applicant also requested that the PUD be approved as a preliminary plan with a finding of water sufficiency for water quality, quantity, and dependability, which would allow the applicant to request the administrative approval of future final plats.

The county notified 27 adjacent property own-

ers and received no responses in favor or against. A neighboring property owner did speak by telephone at the hearing to voice concerns about traffic. The commissioners heard that the applicant had previously held two neighborhood meetings and had modified the plans in response to concerns to add emergency access and a community water system to reduce the number of wells.

Dave Gorman of M.V.E. Inc., on behalf of the applicant, described the proposed development as a clustered residential community in Black Forest with a focus on high efficiency and minimal use of resources. It would encourage the reduced use of motor vehicles and preserve most of the property, along with its natural features. The development would have a community water system and four shared on-site wastewater systems.

The clustering of the development will concentrate it into a 5-acre portion of the site, retaining about 44 acres as open space. The latter would be maintained by the Sanctuary of Peace Homeowners' Association (HOA) but would remain in the ownership of the monastery that would also be a part of the HOA.

Discussion focused on commissioners' concerns over the ownership of the open space and, in particular, what might happen to several private owners down the line if the monastery were to sell the open space or even close it. Vincent Crowder, property and building manager at the monastery, said that the aim

was to preserve the majority of the land as it was in perpetuity for the exclusive use and benefit of the residents and that this was covered in the covenants. He said, however, that this would not be a make or break issue if changes needed to be made. He said, "We would be very open to doing whatever is required to facilitate this request."

Commissioner Becky Fuller said she was uneasy with the monastery owning the open space. She felt ownership needed to lie with the HOA to provide adequate protection for future property owners. Other commissioners shared these concerns.

Trowbridge reminded his fellow commissioners that they have no purview over covenants. Kari Parsons, planner III, Planning and Community Development Department, commented that the HOA covenants had not yet been reviewed by county because this happens at the final plat stage.

Commissioner Tom Bailey said that he agreed with the staff recommendation that the applications met the requirement for approval and that he believed there were enough safety checks in place. The applications were approved 7-1. Fuller voted against, stating that she could not get past the HOA not owning the open space.

The applications are now due to be heard at the BOCC meeting on Dec. 8.

Helen Walklett can be reached at [helenwalklett@ocn.me](mailto:helenwalklett@ocn.me).

Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations, Nov. 14

NEPCO welcomes county commissioners

By Marlene Brown

The Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO) held its general membership meeting Nov. 14 virtually by Zoom because of COVID-19 concerns. Many of the members are practicing the Safer At Home protocols and are still able to be involved in their community.

NEPCO continues to promote a community environment for the preservation of the high quality of life to be expected by the families and homeowners associations (HOAs) in the Tri-Lakes and Black Forest areas. NEPCO serves as a point-of-contact with many levels of county and state government regarding land use matters and living in Northern El Paso County.

Greg Lynd, president of NEPCO, opened the meeting by introducing the other board members and discussing the agenda, which included the annual presentation by El Paso Board of County Commissioners District 1, Holly Williams, and District 3, Stan VanderWerf. The general membership voted by email in September to give the commissioners Honoree Associate Member status for their ongoing contributions to the NEPCO area. An announcement that three open board member positions were being filled

by email election, there were not enough members in attendance to make a quorum and they would hold the election virtually. Emails were to be sent out separately to the general membership, and the election results would be announced at the next meeting. There are 59 members, which includes 47 HOAs in the area and 12 Associate members.

Commissioners' reports

Williams and VanderWerf explained that in the county budget, expenditures include: aging county buildings such as the El Paso County Jail needs upkeep that includes a lobby update, new locks, and cameras. The Citizens Service Center needs updates, but with a majority of the county workforce working from home, they were still able to provide services and productivity commitments.

Other financial challenges are road and infrastructure repairs and the I-25 Gap project, with another \$7.5 million needed to finish the project through the El Paso County corridor. The Department of Public Works has converted all daily briefings to in-vehicle laptop meetings rather than in-person. The budget, with over 2,300 miles of roads to repair and maintain at a certain standard, is funded by property

tax and sales tax.

The county represents 12.5% of the total population of Colorado. Building permits have exceeded 3,500 for each of the past five years and permits for new single-family homes have exceeded 3,600 this year and are expected to reach 5,000. With increased revenue, the county plans to make infrastructure investments and building developments and increase its economic power.

El Paso County Master Plan in final stages

We are now in the final steps of the El Paso County Master Plan, which includes implementation strategies, document development, and a goal of adoption by the county Planning Commission by the first quarter of 2021. For more information on the Master Plan, see <https://elpaso-hlplanning.hub.arcgis.com>.

To contact either commissioner, email them at [HollyWilliams@elpasoco.com](mailto:HollyWilliams@elpasoco.com) or [StanVanderWerf@elpasoco.com](mailto:StanVanderWerf@elpasoco.com).

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The next meeting will be for NEPCO General Membership on Jan. 9 at 10 a.m. See <https://nepco.org>.

Marlene Brown can be reached at [marlenebrown@ocn.me](mailto:marlenebrown@ocn.me).

Woodmoor Improvement Association, Dec. 18

Board approves budget, plans common areas improvements

By Jackie Burhans

The Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) board met on Dec. 18 to approve the budget and make plans for open space improvements. Board member Bert Jean was absent.

Budget approved

The 2021 budget was unanimously approved by the board. The budget includes an increase of less than 3% to the annual dues to \$267 per year. The new budget will be available along with past budgets on the WIA website at <http://bit.ly/wia-budget>.

Common areas improvements

The budget includes funding for plans to complete The Marsh trail loop, install a trail at The Meadows, place benches at both locations, and install a pavilion at Toboggan Hill in 2021. He said work may begin in April or May depending on the weather. More information about Woodmoor common areas can be find at <http://bit.ly/wia-common-areas>.

Board highlights

- Board Treasurer Connie Brown reported that WIA is running about 3.1% under budget on expenses for the year.
- Director of Covenants Ed Miller reported two hearings in October with one resulting in a \$5,000 fine for an open fire.
- Woodmoor Public Safety Chief Kevin Nielsen was presented with a certificate of appreciation

and a medal on Nov. 16 at the D38 Board of Education meeting.

- To date, 700 projects have been submitted to the Architectural Control Committee with a 98.2% approval rate.
- Roofing work on the Barn was scheduled for the week of Nov. 23 and park benches for installation at The Marsh were delivered.
- The board unanimously approved sending account 267WS to the attorney for legal action.

\*\*\*\*\*

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 is tentatively scheduled for Dec. 16 due to the holidays and may be held online.

The WIA calendar can be found at [www.woodmoor.org/wia-calendar/](http://www.woodmoor.org/wia-calendar/). WIA board meeting minutes can be found at [www.woodmoor.org/meeting-minutes/](http://www.woodmoor.org/meeting-minutes/) once approved and posted.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at [jackieburhans@ocn.me](mailto:jackieburhans@ocn.me).

November Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

It was another generally dry month around the region, although this is relative because November is usually one of our driest months of the year anyway. But, given that we have seen well-below normal precipitation since July, we need a few wet months in a row. Temperatures were again warmer than normal.

The first week of the month started with record warmth as temperatures were well above normal. This was most notable during the overnight hours, as low temperatures stayed above freezing for a record six days from the 2nd through the 8th. Not surprisingly, skies were generally clear the entire time with

no precipitation through the 7th. This warmth set records all around the region for the warmest start to November.

Fortunately, more "normal" conditions moved in over the next week with temperatures finally dropping to below freezing on the 9th. This cooler air was accompanied by some snowfall starting during the late morning hours and continuing off and on through evening. The amounts weren't all that impressive, with 1-3 inches for most of us, but this was a nice change from the record warmth and dry conditions. Clear skies behind this departing system, along with the fresh snow, allowed temperatures to dip into





**Above:** Nov. 14 was a calm, sunny Saturday morning when the weather changed abruptly. Within a minute, clouds covered the mountains as if on fast-forward. The temperature dropped and extremely high winds kicked in. Then, snow started to fall. Blizzard-like conditions lasted only 15 minutes before the sun returned. *Photo by Michael Weinfeld.*

the teens and single digits the next few mornings. Temperatures hovered around normal for the next few days, and winds kicked up at times. However, conditions were mainly dry from the 10th through the 23rd. The only exception was a brief snow squall

24th producing another 1-4 inches across the region. After sunshine and seasonal conditions on the 25th, flurries and light snow returned for Thanksgiving evening and into the next morning. Once again, this

that moved through between 10 and 11a.m. on the 14th. This brought with it a period of heavy snow and gusty winds that lasted only about 30 minutes. It was enough to remind us what season we are in, but that was about it.

Temperatures warmed back to above normal levels from the 15th through the 19th, with highs reaching the mid- to upper 60s on a couple afternoons. Slightly cooler air worked its way in from the 20th through 22nd, but the most we got out of this pattern change was a few areas of low clouds.

The Thanksgiving week produced a little more active weather, at least compared to most of the month, with morning snowfall on the

system was starved of moisture, so we picked up less than an inch of new snow. Sunshine and quiet conditions returned for the 28th before another dry cold front brought temperatures to slightly below average to end the month.

A look ahead

December can be a cold one around the region, with daytime highs often staying below freezing and overnight lows that can drop well below zero. The month is generally dry, however, with several light, fluffy snowfalls. Gusty winds are also a common nuisance during the month, especially west of I-25. The chance for a white Christmas is fairly common for the area, with most areas having some snow on the ground and if we are lucky, snowfall on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

November 2020 Weather Statistics

Average High	53.3° (+4.7°)
100-year return frequency value max	55.5° min 38.5°
Average Low	24.6° (+4.2°)
100-year return frequency value max	27.5° min 14.1°
Monthly Precipitation	0.36" (-0.33")
100-year return frequency value max	3.80" min 0.16"
Monthly Snowfall	5.9" (-5.0")
Highest Temperature	74° on the 3rd
Lowest Temperature	12° on the 11th, 30th
Season to Date Snow	10.4" (-11.4")
<i>(the snow season is from Oct 1 to Sept 30)</i>	
Season to Date Precip.	0.53" (-1.89")
<i>(the precip season is from Oct 1 to Sept 30)</i>	
Heating Degree Days	782 (-84)
Cooling Degree Days	0 (0)
<i>Bill Kappel is a meteorologist and Tri-Lakes resident. He can be reached at billkappel@ocn.me.</i>	

Letters to Our Community

*Guidelines for letters are on page 31.*  
*Disclaimer: The information and opinions expressed in Letters to Our Community are the responsibility of the letter writers and should not be interpreted as the views of OCN even if the letter writer is an OCN volunteer.*

Advice for wildlife encounters

For new people that come out to the Monument/Black Forest area and have come from the city, there is a little advice from people that have lived in the area for many years. When you encounter any kind of wildlife, don't chase them, harm them, or feed them.

They will wander off. You have come into their backyard and they are curious to see what is going on. They do not want to stay in your environment, so they will just go back to theirs. Just imagine what they must be thinking.

If you have small animals that are wandering around your yard, just don't leave them out all of the time so that they become a food source for the wildlife.

If you want to raise chickens, put your fence wire down in some cement in the ground and a foot at least and put a fence top on your pen so the hawks

can't come down and take your chickens. Raccoons will come and enjoy themselves to a fresh chicken dinner if you give them a way to get into your coop. If you keep small dogs or cats and let them run free, just know you may not see them again. It's fine to go out and walk your animals around your property, the wildlife is more afraid of you than you are of them.

Enjoy your property and be respectful of the area you came into, which belongs to the wildlife.

Mary Welty

■

December Library Events

Library access further restricted due to coronavirus risk

By Harriet Halbig

Beginning on Nov. 18, in keeping with El Paso County Health Department authorities raising the COVID-19 risk level to red, the Pikes Peak Library District is now open by reservation only for computer use.

Face coverings are required of all patrons and staff.

While in the library, patrons are limited to the computer and printer area. All other areas are closed until further notice, including the stacks and meeting rooms.

All programs including literacy and math tutoring are suspended for the remainder of the calendar year.

Curbside service remains available to pick up your items on hold. Please call 488-2370 ahead of time so that your materials can be ready when you arrive. Alternately, you can text from your car when you arrive and we will bring the items outside.

Hours of service are 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday and Saturday.

Please see our website (ppld.org) for a wide variety of virtual programs including yoga, story time, and book groups. There is a new story time and toddler time each week and previous sessions are available for viewing.

Please access our catalog to view offerings to be placed on hold for curbside pickup.

Materials can be returned to the outdoor book drop on the north side of the building and will be quarantined for 24 hours before processing.

No donated materials can be accepted at this time because the Friends Book Store is inaccessible.

We hope to be able to welcome you back in the near future.

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



**Above:** The Monument Library is now open only for computer use by reservation. Curbside service remains available to retrieve holds. *Photo by Harriet Halbig.*



High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

Our rocky mountainous year

By Janet Sellers

Gardening in the wild, wild weather of the West We live in a seasonal place with definite seasonal weather, predominantly winter. What can we do in our rocky mountain highlands in December? Most years, we have a big, short-term freeze in the middle of fall that makes the ground very hard to work with. This fall I decided to move my bearded irises during our unusually warm October. We hadn't had rain in many weeks, so working the soil was extremely hard, rocky, and difficult.

My usual trick for that is to soak the ground so it's soft, then gently lift the plants out. I dutifully soaked the ground for a few hours over several days, dug into the soft, soaked earth one evening (night soaking is best) to be able to lift the plants out over the next few mornings. Alas, true to form, our area had its typical surprise freeze, hardening the earth, and my iris plants are literally stuck in the same place. Maybe the

plant goddesses wanted to keep them where they are, but I know bearded iris need to be separated every few years to thrive and bloom.

**Even good planning isn't pandemic proof** Earlier this year, I thought I would get a lot done in the garden and keep a schedule. Ironically, I hurt my back just when topsoil was delivered to support miniature white clover seeds for a green space that "I would never have to mow again." With the soil and the grass seed at hand, I then booked landscaper help, got ready to get that moving ...but nope, we had to put everything on hold for many months because of the pandemic! We were supposed to finish everything in June, then September—now spring is looking better than ever.

**Our micro-climates in December, pruning, and planting** In our community, we have adverse microclimates

created by hills, trees, and low areas, desiccating wind, and snow or rain merely streaking over the land. Modifications mostly include thick mulching and watering on days when it's above 40-some degrees, but only when we have a good three hours before and after watering time before the evening cold.

And believe it or not, we can still plant seeds and bulbs now. Just mulch over them well, hiding them from critters for their spring growth. Generally, bulbs need to be planted in a soil depth twice their size; seeds need a light covering of mulch. Winter is safest for pruning dormant trees and bushes.

*Janet Sellers, an ethnoecology gardening hopeful, would like to see gardens thrive effortlessly in the wild, wild West even with its wild, wild climate. Have local successful garden tips? Send them to JanetSellers@ocn.me.*

Art Matters

The arts and our health



By Janet Sellers  
"Touch has a memory."—John Keats

This winter season, maybe as a respite from stress, let's have a go at making some art, even if just with pencil and paper. Making and viewing pleasant art can help us through stressful times and help us care for our emotional well-being. Making art is linked to improved memory, reasoning, and resilience.

I recently completed specialized training to be an arts facilitator for Military Arts Connection (MAC), developed by the Cultural Office of the Pikes Peak Region and Colorado Creative Industries. While it's not art therapy, MAC is a joint initiative between the National Endowment for the Arts, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Veterans Affairs that focuses on arts and healing in the military sector.

Our training group studied military culture, classes specific to veterans, and information about traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress. The latter two health issues also affect the lives of many others, and our overwhelming, albeit needed use of screen time, affects our bodies and brains, especially in children. Developing art skills may help with resiliency.

We all have a powerful connection to nature,

beauty, and observation. For decades, I have taught using a results-focused method I developed for drawing in a beautiful and dynamic way from observation. Beauty helps us be creative. We start our art observation with simple, natural things such as fresh, aromatic apples or oranges and draw using chunks of charcoal.

I have students use their fingers with the charcoal. We do various exercises to see how the charcoal and chalk react to depositing it, taking it out with an eraser, and moving it with finger pressure. Putting media to paper, we observe dark and light. We explore the materials for what we can do with them, adding and removing tone. It's an efficient way to teach my students using their visual and tactile skills to understand form, light, shade, and visual space.

I suspected there was something critical to our fingers directly holding chalk, touching the page for drawing. I wondered why it helps learning so much and recently discovered verifiable evidence via neurological studies regarding the brain and the fingertips.

Neuroscientific research has shown that the brain outsources some neural processing to other parts of the body such as the retina for visual process-

ing and fingertips for tactile processing. Sophisticated processing is going on from the senses of touch and sight formerly attributed to the brain.

Andrew Pruszynski and Roland Johansson of Umea University in Sweden tested volunteers and recorded nerve fiber impulses from various stimuli. The fingertips are among the most highly sensitive parts of the human body, and when the researchers checked out the neurotransmitters in the fingertips, they found the nerve endings in the fingertips perform neural computations that were thought to occur in the brain.

Their findings may have implications for rehabilitation, working toward regrowing peripheral nerves in people with nerve injury. "It's important to consider not just how many neurons grow back, but also how they grow back, as this may be critical to the type of information sent to the brain."

Our sense of touch teaches us, helps us think. Beauty is enlivening and uplifting and helps us be whole. When art touches our heart and embodies beauty, we thrive.

*Janet Sellers is an award-winning artist and avid researcher, teacher, and writer. Contact her at janetsellers@ocn.me*

Snapshots of Our Community

Harvest of Love



**Above** Organized by the Kiwanis Club, this annual October event is accomplished by the students, faculty, and staff in every school throughout Lewis-Palmer School District 38. Non-perishable food collection boxes are established at each school. Once filled, the containers are picked up by Kiwanis volunteers and delivered to Tri-Lakes Cares to replenish and fortify its food pantry. **Above left:** During the first week of November, Harvest of Love Food Drive collection boxes were loaded and transported by Monument Hill Kiwanis Club members from all the schools throughout Lewis-Palmer School District 38. Here, boxes of non-perishable food

items are being picked up at Palmer Lake Elementary School by Kiwanis members. **Above right:** On Nov. 4, members of the Monument Hill Kiwanis Club transported the proceeds of the Harvest of Love Food Drive to Tri-Lakes Cares.

This year, D38 contributed over \$5,358 in cash donations and 15,208 pounds of non-perishable food.

*Photos by Sharon Williams.*



Train Separation in Palmer Lake



**Above:** On Nov. 7, a very long train of coal became separated in Palmer lake. A number of cars were left behind until the front engine stopped and waited until the last portion could be reattached. Witness Jess Neal reported, “My wife and I had just arrived at Charritos House for a little brunch and when we stepped out of the car we noticed the back part of the train slowing to a stop and the rest of it continuing for a little ways farther. It happened around 10:40 a.m. The pusher engines just cleared the County Line Road crossing so there was no problem with it being blocked. BNSF crews were there quickly attending to the problem.” *Upper photo by Jess Neal. Lower photo by John Howe.*

TLC provides Thanksgiving



**Above:** On Nov. 11, members of the Lewis-Palmer High School Key Club gathered at Tri-Lakes Cares to assemble enough items in each bag to prepare a complete Thanksgiving meal. These were then distributed on Nov. 21 to households who would not have had food on their tables for the holiday. Due to the generosity of the community, this was made possible through the annual Harvest of Love Food Drive organized earlier during October by the Monument Hill Kiwanis Club. Non-perishable food collection boxes were established at all schools throughout Lewis-Palmer School District 38. Students, faculty, and staff contributed over \$5,358 in cash donations and 15,208 pounds of non-perishable food items. Local businesses including Safeway, King Soopers and Walmart supplemented with perishable groceries. *Photos by Sharon Williams.*

OCN nominated for award



**Above:** On Nov. 7, *Our Community News (OCN)* was recognized as a nominee for 2019 Nonprofit of the Year at the Tri-Lakes Chamber’s annual dinner. Since 2001, the more than 40 OCN volunteers, represented by David Futey, Lisa Hatfield, and John Howe, have ensured that the over 235 editions have reached Tri-Lakes area mailboxes on the first Saturday each month. Each OCN issue provides unfiltered reporting on Tri-Lakes-area government meetings from town councils, school, water and fire districts, coverage on community events, a community calendar and a forum for readers through Letters to the Editor. Winners in each of the Chamber’s categories were: Nonprofit of the Year: Bethesda Gardens-Monument; Ambassador of the Year: Karen Heun; Volunteer of the Year: Lisa Hatfield; and co-recipients due to a voting tie for Businessperson of the Year: Kyle and Carrie Baker, Christian Brothers Automotive, and Steve Fisher, Heartland Payment Systems. *Photo by David Futey.*

Hatfield - volunteer of the year



**Above:** On Nov. 7, Lisa Hatfield was recognized as 2019 Volunteer of the Year by the Tri-Lakes Chamber at the Chamber’s annual dinner. Hatfield’s extensive list of volunteering includes: activities with Pikes Peak Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) such as staffing the El Paso County Public Health COVID-19 call center, CERT instructor for wildfire preparedness and creating videos such as CERT Wildfire Evacuation with Animals available on YouTube; Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church Emergency Preparedness Group that assists property owners with wildfire clean up and mitigation; and acting secretary for Colorado South Central Region Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster. Hatfield has also volunteered with *Our Community News* since 2012 in a variety of roles including managing editor from 2014-18 and reporter. Hatfield attributes her religious foundation and the Holy Spirit with providing her the energy to engage and support the Tri-Lakes community in so many ways. *Photo by David Futey.*



# Kiwanis donates to TLC



**Above:** On Nov. 12, Leaders of the Monument Hill Kiwanis Club (MHKC) presented a \$10,000 check to benefit Tri-Lakes Cares (TLC). This donation was made possible by a grant from the Rocky Mountain District Kiwanis Foundation. In turn, this foundation grant was matched by the Monument Hill club. The matched donation accompanied proceeds of the 2020 October Empty Bowls and Silent Auction event, which raised an additional \$15,362 for TLC. From left are Jack Fry, MHKC president; Dave Wittman, MHKC Empty Bowls project manager; Pete Peterson, MHKC past president; Christine Bucher, TLC development director; and Haley Chapin, TLC executive director. *Photo by Warren Gerig, MHKC.*



**Above:** On Nov. 12, a second check presentation was made by Monument Hill Kiwanis Club (MHKC) to Tri-Lakes Cares (TLC). This check for \$15,362 was proceeds from the Oct. 3 Annual Empty Bowls and Virtual Silent Auction Event. This Empty Bowls check accompanied the first check donation for \$10,000, which was provided through a grant from the Rocky Mountain District Kiwanis Foundation. In turn, this foundation grant was matched by the MHKC. From left are Jack Fry, MHKC president; Dave Wittman, MHKC Empty Bowls project manager; Pete Peterson, MHKC past president; Christine Bucher, TLC development director; and Haley Chapin, TLC executive director. *Photo by Warren Gerig, MHKC.*

# Turkey crossing



**Above:**A flock of about 20 wild turkeys wandered through South Woodmoor in the early morning on Nov. 27. Each footprint is about 3 inches long. *Photo by Lisa Hatfield.*

# The eagle has landed



**Above:** Kellyn Bryan of the Monument Public Works Department was at Monument Lake on Nov. 17 when he spotted a large bird along the shore. It was an eagle. There have been sightings of an eagle flying around the lake before, but it was unusual to see one on the ground. The bird next to the eagle seemed surprised, too. *Photo by Kellyn Bryan.*

# Silver Alliance Thrift Store is open



**Above:** On Nov. 19, six of the 24 volunteers who do double duty at the Silver Alliance Thrift Store posed in front of some of its Christmas wares. The store is filled with many treasures, and at this time many are for Christmas. The store is at 755 Highway 105 Suite N (Westside Center) in Palmer Lake. Proceeds of the nonprofit go to support the Senior Center projects at the building on the Lewis-Palmer High School campus. From left are Sue Graf, Donald Hodge, Deb Muir (seated), Lorraine Hodge, Gertie Schiller, and Bonnie Pina. *Photo by John Howe.*

# Visitor on-street parking prohibited



**Above:** Since April, the Town of Palmer Lake has instituted an ordinance prohibiting parking on all town streets, with the exception of Palmer Lake residents. Abundant signage serves as notification, and while this photo shows the town streets are clear of street parking, visitor parking in specified areas is clearly marked. *Photo by Janet Sellers.*



Monumental Impact



**Above:** A new nonprofit in the Tri-Lakes area, Monumental Impact, has been busy collaborating with D38's Bearbotics robotics team to complete its Phase I changes to the East Rooms of the Grace Best Facility. The space will be used by Bearbotics and can also be used by local businesses to provide student project experiences in engineering, technology, and entrepreneurship. Students can also receive mentorship through a new Career Pathways Explorer program. **Above:** From left, Palmer Ridge High School students Cameron Hinkle and Dane VanDenHoek gave a fresh set of paint to the Bearbotics' new "Bear Cave" in the East Rooms on Oct. 16. **Below left:** When Palmer Ridge High School went to distance-learning-mode only, Bearbotics coaches, mentors, and adult volunteers used the community room on Nov. 16 to sort items for distribution to those who supported the team during their Butter Braids fundraiser. From left are Jeanette Breton, Noreen Griffin, Matt Middleton, Ben Griffin, and Dana Glass. **Below right:** On Oct. 20, Bearbotics team member James Balaraman worked on a Raspberry Pi conferencing option to provide connectivity to remote team members. *Photos by Bearbotics Coach Mike Hinkle.*



Bell ringing kicks off



**Above:** Saturday, Nov. 28, was kick-off day for Salvation Army bell ringing at King Soopers and Walmart Monument locations. This holiday fund-raising effort benefits Pikes Peak-area households in need of food, shelter, and other basic necessities. Ringing is on a limited schedule Saturdays, Sundays, Wednesdays, and Christmas Eve, with hours from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monument Hill Kiwanis Club serves as the sponsoring organizer of bell-ringing volunteers, which include members from Kiwanis, the Palmer Ridge and Lewis-Palmer High School Key Clubs, Tri-Lakes Women's Club, Woodmen Valley Chapel, and Boy Scout Troop 17. All COVID-19 protocols will be observed. This year, donations can also be made online for the Salvation Army Virtual Red Kettle program using website <https://salarmy.us/COSpringsMHKcKettle>, Apple Pay, or Google Pay. Inset photo is Ron Mangiarelli, Kiwanis member Salvation Army project manager. *Photo by Sharon Williams.*

Chili Supper supports PL star



**Above:** Every year since 1935, excluding the years during WWII, the Star lighting has been a holiday tradition in Palmer Lake. On Saturday, Nov. 28, instead of friends and neighbors gathering in the Town Hall to enjoy chili or mac and cheese prepared by the Palmer Lake Fire Department, the meals were hand-delivered to vehicles driving by the fire station. A steady flow of vehicles made their way through the event with all involved using face masks, and the chili was sold out by 6:30 p.m. This year's winner of the drawing to ride the fire truck up to light the Star at 7 p.m. sharp was Anika Pgoar. The Star is maintained by the PLFD and volunteers. The approximately 300 tickets sold for the Chili Supper this year provide funds for supplies and repairs to the Star. *Photo by Steve Pate.*



Christmas spirit in Tri-Lakes



**Above:** Christmas lights adorn the trees along Second Street as one comes west from the freeway into Historic Downtown. The Parks and Open Space Division of the Monument Public Works Department is responsible for these decorations. *Photo by John Howe.*



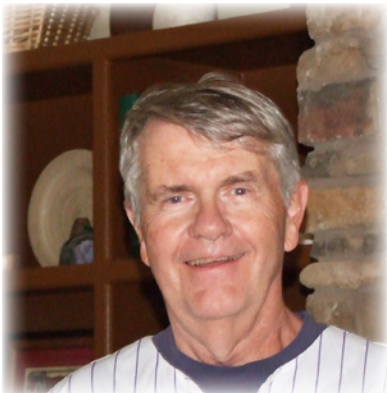
**Above:** Again this year, School District 38 has adorned the administration building, aka Big Red, with a beautiful lighted tree on the north wall. *Photo by John Howe.*

**Right:** Christmas lights have started to light up our nights in the Tri-Lakes area. I'm grateful we no longer light our trees with candles glued to the tree branches with melted wax and can use electric light-emitting diodes instead. The effect is still breathtaking but a lot safer. *Photo by Lisa Hatfield.*





OCN staff



*There is always room  
for one more!*

*Interested? Contact us  
at [editor@ocn.me](mailto:editor@ocn.me) or  
(719) 488-3455*



Pictured on the facing page are some of the many volunteers who make Our Community News happen each month. See related snapshot on page 23 about OCN's nomination as Tri-Lakes Chamber nonprofit of the year. There is a two-minute video about OCN posted at [www.ocn.me/about\\_ocn.htm](http://www.ocn.me/about_ocn.htm). Photos courtesy of our wonderful volunteers.

First row (L to R)

Abeyta, Coleen  
Alchian, Allen  
Barnes, Judy  
Barszcz, Natalie  
Brown, Marlene

Second row

Burhans, Jackie  
Burkart, Audrey  
Fisher-Olson, Arlene  
Fitzpatrick, Jim  
Futey, David

Third row

Halbig, Harriet  
Hatfield, Lisa  
Heiser, John  
Houy, Gary  
Howald, James

Fourth row

Howe, John  
Kappel, Bill  
Kaylor, Jennifer  
Kendrick, Jim  
McGrath, Mike

Fifth row

Meyer, Ross  
Myers, Denny & Dorothy  
Pate, Lynda and Steve

Sixth row

Pollard, Chris  
Robenstein, Allison  
Sellers, Janet  
Statham, Kim  
Vangala, Sree (Sreedevi)

Seventh row

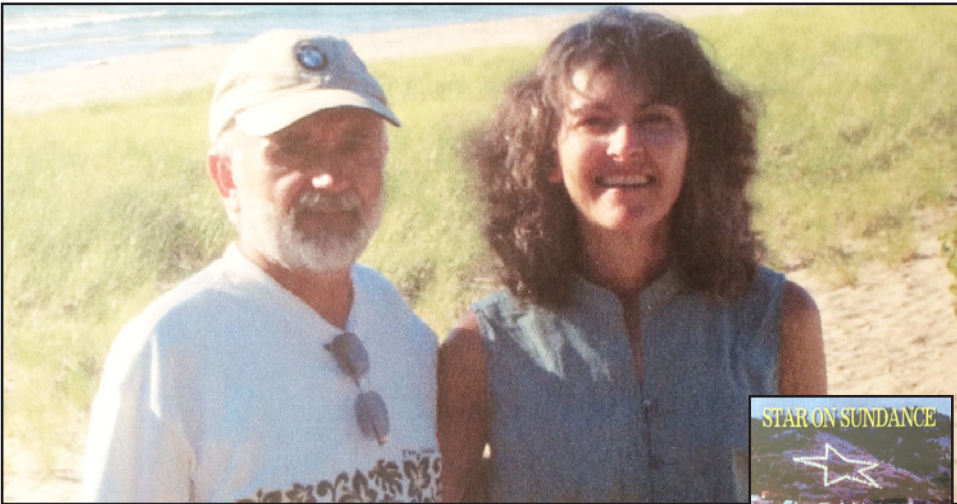
Walklett, Helen  
Weinfeld, Michael  
Williams, Sharon  
Witte, Joyce

Some of volunteers not pictured:

Aggers, Mark,  
Ashford, Anya,  
Branch, Katy  
Burkart, Becky  
Caputo, Linda  
Clancy, Elizabeth  
Collins, Kathy  
Cooper, Dave  
Davis, Bill  
Holmes, Betty  
Johnson, Brooke  
Johnston, Rose  
Jones, Kerrie  
Keeffe, Colleen  
Lang, Doug  
Novack, Geena "Gertie"  
Pangelinan, Kate  
Plank, Tommie  
Savage, Phil  
Sheppard, Terri  
Wicklund, Mike  
Wilfong, Debby  
Wilkie, Madison  
Zimmermann, Bev

And we hear from our readers

Our Community News has a loyal readership, which is truly appreciated by the all-volunteer staff. In light of this gratitude, some readers were asked when they first found OCN, where they read it, why they read it, suggestions, and also what they're up to these days. Here are some their answers.



**Above:** Jim and Diane Sawatzki of Palmer Lake started reading OCN over 20 years ago. Jim says, "OCN just tells it like it is, the facts we need to know. I really liked when you started having more human-interest features and color photos—I really like that!" They read OCN over the course of the month at the kitchen table or sitting by a sunny window. "It's like a monthly magazine and there's a lot in it. We like to take our time and read the articles, they are very thorough with lots of facts and important news. OCN reports real news, not just stuff." For years, Sawatzki was a local mail carrier, Palmer Lake firefighter, and is a Telly Award-winning, Emmy-nominated documentary producer/director with a powerful local history vocation via his Palmer Divide Productions. Jim says, "We'll be on PBS this month for the holiday season celebrating local traditions." His *Star on Sundance* (Palmer Lake star) historical documentary will air on Denver PBS channel 12, Dec. 16. Photo courtesy of Jim Sawatzki.



**Left:** Mary Welty lives northeast of the Black Forest area on a historic ranch and has an art gallery there. She picks up the paper from the stacks delivered to the Black Forest area, now that OCN delivers there, and takes it home to read on her art studio sun porch. "I'm not too big on politics anymore, but I use the calendar section all month. Monument is where I shop, so I keep the paper with me and plan my shopping around the events I'd like to go to when I go into town."

As an artist, the cultural news is important to her and to her art clients. Her newest painting series for the holiday season focuses on equine art based on her ranch life and her love of horses. "I also think helping new people understand how to live with wildlife in our natural setting is very important; I'd like to see more wildlife articles in OCN." Photo courtesy of Mary Welty. See also Mary's letter on page 21.

Why advertise in OCN?

- **OCN is mailed FREE to every resident and business in the Tri-Lakes area.** We mail more than 20,700 copies every month and put another 700 copies in stacks throughout the area. OCN has the largest mailed circulation and the third-largest circulation among local newspapers in El Paso County after *The Gazette* and *The Colorado Springs Independent*. We put copies of OCN into the hands of those people most likely to buy your products or services: local residents and businesses.
- **OCN is a primary source for Tri-Lakes area news.** Since its founding in 2001, OCN has been presenting unbiased, detailed coverage of Tri-Lakes area governmental entities and their deliberations and actions. Credibility is key. Advertising in a credible medium typically rubs off on the advertisers in that media.
- **OCN gives preference to Tri-Lakes area businesses.** As part of OCN's long-standing commitment to encouraging the economic health of the Tri-Lakes area, we offer a significantly discounted ad rate to Tri-Lakes area businesses as a way to help local businesses like yours succeed.
- **OCN's low ad rates and monthly publication schedule help stretch your ad budget.** OCN has one of the lowest ad costs per printed copy of any local publication. Since OCN is a monthly publication, your ad is out there for a month—more than four times longer than other local papers. Many of our advertisers tell us they're still getting calls in the third and fourth week of the month.
- **OCN doesn't use contracts.** You aren't tied down. Adjust your advertising month-to-month to meet your changing needs. Our advertisers advertise with us because they see benefit in it, not because they're bound by a contract they signed months before. To reward frequent advertisers, OCN has a Frequent Advertiser Bonus (FAB) rewards program. You earn up to 10% of your ad cost as a reward you can use to reduce the cost of future OCN advertising. The more you advertise with OCN, the more you save. Thanks to our FAB rewards program, OCN advertisers have saved more than \$78,300!
- **You are supporting a good thing.** Your advertising dollars support a unique all-volunteer, Tri-Lakes-focused effort to present factual, comprehensive news to all Tri-Lakes area residents and businesses.

And the best reason of all: It works!

**Crystal Wright, Crystal's In-Home Training** - "I have had the best success with advertising in the Our Community News for my business. 95% of my new clients are coming from this local paper, and I couldn't be more pleased. If you are thinking of advertising in the Monument area, I recommend you advertise with this paper."

**Mike Smith, Woodsmith Custom Creations** - "OCN is the only paper that works for me. I've tried other newspapers, one that comes out daily and another that comes out weekly. Compared to the results I get from advertising in the OCN the other papers are flops. I get a fairly priced ad in my targeted area with calls referencing my ad every month. It can't be beat!"

**Randi and Dale Sehestedt, Woodmoor Handyman and Snow Plowing** - "OCN is the only paper we advertise in and it consistently brings us plenty of good local customers. Great paper and great people to work with."

**Mary Sue Hafey, Fringe Benefits Custom Interiors** - "Since I starting advertising with OCN years ago, it has helped brand my company while consistently increasing my exposure and sales!"

**Elba D'Asaro, Spa Medica** - "OCN ads work!"

**Mike Reaster, Guitar Lessons** - "Ads in OCN work great for me. I tried other local papers and got no response. Thanks to my ads in OCN, I can work from home and make a decent living. All my work comes from my ads in OCN."

For more information on advertising, go to [www.ocn.me/advertise.htm](http://www.ocn.me/advertise.htm) or contact John Heiser at (719) 488-3455 or [ads@ocn.me](mailto:ads@ocn.me).



# Our Community Notices

By Judy Barnes, Events Editor

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.

### Are you experiencing hardship?

Connect with Tri-Lakes Cares for assistance with groceries, rent or mortgage, utilities, car repair, and medical assistance at [www.tri-lakescares.org/coronavirus](http://www.tri-lakescares.org/coronavirus). For more information, call 719-481-4864. See ad on page 3.

### Volunteer for Tri-Lakes Cares

There are many areas within Tri-Lakes Cares that you can help serve. Volunteers interact with clients, stock the food pantry, distribute grocery orders, process donations, pack Snack Packs for local youth, and contribute in many other ways to the success of Tri-Lakes Cares. Becoming a volunteer is easy and fun. For details, contact Volunteer Coordinator Nichole Pettigrew, 719-481-4864 x113, [VolunteerCoordinator@Tri-LakesCares.org](mailto:VolunteerCoordinator@Tri-LakesCares.org); or visit <https://tri-lakescares.org/volunteer/>.

### Tri-Lakes Cares needs us more than ever

Tri-Lakes Cares is the only food pantry and human services organization located in and serving northern El Paso County through emergency, self-sufficiency, and relief 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 make a financial donation. For more information about Tri-Lakes Cares or how you can help, contact Brendan Rhoades, TLC's Community Engagement Manager: 719-481-4864, ext. 111; [communityengagementmanager@tri-lakecares.org](mailto:communityengagementmanager@tri-lakecares.org); or visit [www.tri-lakescares.org](http://www.tri-lakescares.org).

### Tri-Lakes Cares seeks director of development

Are you ready to apply your fundraising experience in the role of director of development with a creative and innovative nonprofit that supports local community members who find themselves in a time of need? Find out more about this job posting at the Tri-Lakes Cares website, [www.tri-lakescares.org/about-tlc/employment](http://www.tri-lakescares.org/about-tlc/employment).

### Silver Key senior services

Connection Cafe's "Grab and Go" meal clients will receive three frozen meals for the week; meals must be requested in advance for the following week. A \$2.25 donation is requested. Please call 719-884-2300 to reserve your meal. Meals on Wheels and Home Delivered Meals will deliver frozen meals for the week to Monument on Wednesdays. If you qualify but are not yet enrolled for meals, phone 719-884-2300 or visit [www.silverkey.org](http://www.silverkey.org). The Food Pantry is implementing a "pick up only" model for clients. Mon.-Fri., noon-12:30 p.m., Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy. 105, Palmer Lake. Reserve & Ride is temporarily limited to essential transportation needs only: strictly medical and food-related trips. Reservations are requested, phone 719-884-2300. For more information about senior services, visit [www.silverkey.org](http://www.silverkey.org).

### Silver Key Calls of Reassurance for seniors

Extended social isolation and loneliness significantly impact the quality of life and health of older adults. The current public health crisis has increased the need for seniors to receive these critical calls and connection with others. Seniors who self-enroll can be called weekly (one to three times) to talk with a Silver Key volunteer. It offers two types of helpful calls. Social Calls are for seniors who wish to have a weekly, bright, and supportive connection with a well-trained VIP volunteer. Safety Checks are similar to Social Calls, but if the senior does not answer after three calls, emergency contacts (maintained on file) will be called, then the police if the emergency contacts cannot be reached. For more details, visit [www.silverkey.org](http://www.silverkey.org).

### Free services for seniors

Mountain Community Senior Services offers free transportation and handyman services to Tri-Lakes seniors. Private transportation to medical appointments or a grocery store is now provided by Envida, 719-633-4677. If you need grab bars in the bathroom, a ramp to your door, or repair of stairs or railings, please call Cindy Rush, 488-0076, and leave a message or visit [www.coloradoseniorhelp.com](http://www.coloradoseniorhelp.com).

### Santa on Patrol Toy Drive, donate by Dec. 14

Santa is teaming up with the Monument Police Department, the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Department, and Toys for Tots to deliver toys and good cheer to families in need in the Tri-Lakes area. New, unwrapped toys may be dropped off by **Dec. 14**, 3 p.m., at the Monument Police Department, 645 Beacon Lite Road, or at any Toys 4 Tots box at various businesses throughout the Tri-Lakes area. Please drop off all gift cards to the Monument Police Department. This year, due to COVID-19, Santa and his first responder elves will visit selected families to deliver toys

on **Dec. 19**. If you know a family who would benefit from this event, submit your nomination by Dec. 7. Please include the name and age of child/children in the household, the name of parent(s), address and phone number, and a brief description of why the family is a good candidate. You can email your nomination to [Santa@tomgov.org](mailto:Santa@tomgov.org).

### Wescott Santa on Patrol

Meet Santa on his fire truck with the Wescott firefighters. This year's Santa Patrol will be either **Dec. 12 or 19**; check the website or facebook page for updates. Info: 488-8680, [info@wescottfire.org](mailto:info@wescottfire.org), [www.wescottfire.org](http://www.wescottfire.org).

**2020 Virtual Red Kettle Holiday Bell Ringing**  
Monument Hill Kiwanis Club will conduct bellringing on a limited schedule Saturdays, Sundays, Wednesdays, and Christmas Eve at King Soopers and at one or two doors at Walmart, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. To volunteer, visit [www.monumenthillkiwanis.org](http://www.monumenthillkiwanis.org). The need is much greater this year. Your donations help The Salvation Army provide meals, shelter, gifts, and other holiday assistance for our community. Look for volunteer bellringers, or donate online with the Salvation Army Virtual Red Kettle at [www.monumenthillkiwanis.org](http://www.monumenthillkiwanis.org). See ad on page 3.

### Tri-Lakes Y offers virtual membership

Join your favorite YMCA instructors for online health, wellness, and fitness classes to help you stay motivated anywhere. Plus, stream thousands of classes. Free for members, \$9.99/month for non-members. Sign up by **Dec. 13**. Learn more and opt-in at [ppymca.org/burnalong](http://ppymca.org/burnalong). See ad on page 6.

### National Wreaths Across America, Dec. 19

The Town of Monument will observe Wreaths across America Day at 10 a.m., **Dec. 19**, at the Monument Cemetery, 800 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. This day is to remember our fallen U.S. veterans, honor those who serve, and teach our children the value of freedom. You can sponsor a veteran's wreath at Monument Cemetery for only \$15 per wreath. Visit [www.wreathsassamerica.org](http://www.wreathsassamerica.org) and click on "sponsor a specific cemetery" (under "Sponsor Wreaths"). For more information, contact Theresa Wiederspahn, 719-471-9900, or email [theresa.wiederspahn@dignitymemorial.com](mailto:theresa.wiederspahn@dignitymemorial.com); [www.wreathsassamerica.org](http://www.wreathsassamerica.org).

### Kiwanis holiday wine and coffee gift sales, order by Dec. 28

Monument Hill Kiwanis Club offers wine and coffee for pickup, and wine for shipment to some states. All proceeds go back to the community. Order online at [www.monumenthillkiwanis.org](http://www.monumenthillkiwanis.org). See ad on page 3.

### Sisters' Thrift & Boutique Open

The Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery have a shop full of gently used treasures, including clothing and accessories, household items, and small furniture at 8674 N. Union Blvd., Colorado Springs. Store hours are Mon.-Fri., 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m., and Saturdays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. The phone number is 719-282-0316. The shop welcomes donations and volunteers. For more information about Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery visit [www.benethillmonastery.org](http://www.benethillmonastery.org). For a \$5-off coupon, see ad on page 11.

### DMV services available online and at kiosks

Most driver and vehicle services can be completed online at [mydmv.colorado.gov](http://mydmv.colorado.gov). Residents can renew their motor vehicle registration online at [mydmv.colorado.gov](http://mydmv.colorado.gov), by phone at 520-6240, by mail, or by self-service kiosks at King Soopers (1070 W. Baptist Rd., Monument) or at the North Motor Vehicle Office at 8830 N. Union Blvd. (24/7 kiosk). For more information, phone 520-6200 or visit [clerkandrecorder.elpasoco.com](http://clerkandrecorder.elpasoco.com). See ad on page 2.

### MVEA Energy Star appliance and light bulb rebates

Mountain View Electric offers rebates to encourage energy efficiency. Save on your monthly electric bill by replacing incandescent and halogen light bulbs and old appliances with Energy Star certified equipment. Find more information and a Rebate Product Guide at [www.mvea.coop/rebates](http://www.mvea.coop/rebates). See ad on page 32.

### MVEA outdoor power equipment rebates

Mountain View Electric Association will reward you to switch from gas to electric powered outdoor equipment. Visit [www.mvea.coop/rebates](http://www.mvea.coop/rebates) to learn more.

### Co-op Connections by MVEA

Mountain View Electric Association offers a free app to find discounts from local merchants. Help keep small businesses thriving. Save also on travel and on-line shopping. For more information and to download the app, visit [www.connections.coop](http://www.connections.coop).

### MVEA Scholarships

Each year, MVEA awards \$1,000 scholarships to 14 graduating high school seniors. Applications are due by **Jan. 18, 2021**. Apply online at [www.mvea.coop/scholarships](http://www.mvea.coop/scholarships). For more information contact Erica Meyer, 719-494-2654, [erica.m@mvea.coop](mailto:erica.m@mvea.coop).

### LEAP—Help for heating bills

The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) is a

federally funded program that provides cash assistance to help families and individuals pay a portion of winter home heating costs. The eligibility period for LEAP runs **Nov. 1-April 30**. Application packets will automatically be mailed to residents who received LEAP assistance last year at the address where they were living at that time. To find out if you qualify for LEAP, call 1-866 HEAT-HELP (866-432-8435) or visit [www.colorado.gov/cdhs/leap](http://www.colorado.gov/cdhs/leap).

### Openings on Monument boards

The Town of Monument has openings on its Planning Commission and Board of Adjustments. For more information, visit [www.townofmonument.org](http://www.townofmonument.org).

### Taste of Palmer Lake

This year, your ticket will get you free food or beverage offerings from all of our Palmer Lake restaurants. Purchase your ticket and receive a punch card for a one-time use for your free item anytime through **Feb. 28, 2021**. This is a limited time offer. Tickets are \$25, available at all Palmer Lake restaurants, and all the money goes to this year's downtown Christmas decorations. Help light up Palmer Lake. For details, visit [awakepalmerlake.org](http://awakepalmerlake.org).

### Virtual Fill the Boot Campaign for Muscular Dystrophy

Local firefighters won't be able to conduct their campaign in person this year, but you can still support their fundraising efforts. Visit <https://filltheboot.donordrive.com/participant/Tri-Lakes-Monument-Fire>.

### National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) free virtual support groups

NAMI's Connection Support Group provides weekly peer support for anyone with a mental health diagnosis. It is facilitated by people managing their own mental illnesses, and structured to meet the diverse needs of those with depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and more. Connections meets Tuesdays, 7-8:30 p.m. Join via Zoom, <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87298315118>. You can fill out a new participant form at [www.namicoloradosprings.org/connection-support-group.html](http://www.namicoloradosprings.org/connection-support-group.html).

The weekly Family Support Group provides peer support for family members as their loved ones encounter the ups and downs that come with living with mental illness and working toward recovery. This group meets Thursdays, 7-8:30 p.m. and you can join via Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89344149472>. For links to the above information and other groups, visit [www.namicoloradosprings.org](http://www.namicoloradosprings.org). Info: 719-473-8477, email [info@namicos.org](mailto:info@namicos.org), or visit [www.namicoloradosprings.org](http://www.namicoloradosprings.org).

### Jewish Family Service offers virtual counseling for all

Jewish Family Service (JFS) of Colorado's virtual counseling services are available to anyone throughout the state who is feeling overwhelmed or in crisis at this time. JFS supports everyone, not just those of the Jewish faith. JFS accepts private insurance, self-pay, Medicare, Medicaid, and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and offers a sliding-fee schedule for those with limited financial resources and will not turn away anyone in crisis. To find out more about virtual counseling and the various services JHS offers, phone 303-597-5000 or visit the website, [www.jewishfamilyservice.org](http://www.jewishfamilyservice.org).

### Small-business grants available

The Energize Colorado Gap Fund will provide more than \$25 million in small-business loans and grants to boost small businesses impacted by COVID-19. Sole proprietors, businesses, and nonprofits with less than 25 full-time employees can apply for up to a \$15,000 grant and a \$20,000 loan for a possible combined total of \$35,000 in financial assistance. For more information and to purchase PPE, visit <https://energizecolorado.com>.

### County parks update

Park headquarters are open Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Park restrooms have begun to reopen. Fountain Creek and Bear Creek Nature Centers are open Tue.-Sat., 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Playgrounds are open for use with no more than 25 people at a time. Pavilions at Fox Run Regional Park are limited to 17 people at a time. Organized recreational youth or adult league sports may resume activities with no more than 25 players. Parents may attend youth sports activities but must remain 6 feet apart from non-household members. Spectators are strongly discouraged for adult sports. A permit is required through El Paso County Parks for organized sports. The remainder of county parks, trails, and open spaces remain open. Park users are highly encouraged to practice social distancing (6 feet apart) and wear masks while enjoying the county park system. While on trails, warn other users of your presence as you pass, and step aside to let others pass. For more information, visit [www.elpasoco.com/parks](http://www.elpasoco.com/parks), email to [Parks@elpasoco.com](mailto:Parks@elpasoco.com), or call 719-520-7529.

### D38's choice enrollment

Lewis-Palmer School District 38 provides innovative and relevant programming for all students grades pK-12. In-



district and non-resident families may apply to enroll students in a school other than their assigned neighborhood school. D38's choice enrollment window for the 2021-22 school year is open **Jan. 4-Feb. 5, 2021**. For more information, visit [www.lewispalmer.org/enroll](http://www.lewispalmer.org/enroll). See ad on page 9.

Monument Academy is enrolling

Monument Academy is a free public school of choice and features academic excellence, award-winning programs, and more. Learn about this growing school; schedule a tour at 481-1950 ext. 1710, [www.monumentacademy.net](http://www.monumentacademy.net).

St. Peter School enrolling

St. Peter is offering in-person learning five days a week. Preschool through eighth grade feature academics, athletics, and faith formation. For more information, call 719-481-1855 or visit [petertherockschool.org](http://petertherockschool.org). See ad on page 2.

Help protect firefighters and yourselves

Hundreds of firefighters across the country have COVID-19. Even with personal protective equipment and

strong infection control procedures, hundreds of firefighters are sick. Some have died. Here are some steps you can take to make it safer for firefighters and others on the front lines of the COVID-19 battle. (1) Stay home and practice social distancing. (2) Call 911 for emergencies only. (3) If you do need to call 911, alert the call-taker if anyone in your household has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or has experienced any symptoms such as cough or fever. (4) Make a list of all medications being taken by each member of your household, along with a medical history. Do it now and keep it handy, just in case. (5) Collect a few things a loved one might need if they must go to the hospital. A phone charger, eyeglasses, wallet, ID, and insurance card(s) are great things to include.

Can you volunteer today?

Links to local organizations with an immediate need for volunteers are listed on the county's website, [www.elpasocountyhealth.org/community-resources-0](http://www.elpasocountyhealth.org/community-resources-0), for groups like Care and Share, Crossfire Ministries, Citizen's Project (email [joy@citizensproject.org](mailto:joy@citizensproject.org) for virtual opportunities to help with Census 2020), 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).

Palmer Lake prohibits visitor parking

The Town of Palmer Lake has issued an emergency ordinance prohibiting parking on all town streets, with the exception of Palmer Lake residents, and closing the parking area at the reservoir trailhead on Old Carriage Road during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Senior Beat newsletter—subscribe for free

Each monthly *Senior Beat* newsletter is full of information for local seniors, including the daily menu of the senior lunches offered Monday through Friday at the Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Highway 105, Palmer Lake. It also contains the schedule of the classes and events for the month at the Senior Citizens Center and senior-friendly library programs. To subscribe, send an email with your name and mailing address to [SeniorBeat@TriLakesSeniors.org](mailto:SeniorBeat@TriLakesSeniors.org). *Senior Beat* can also be viewed online at [www.TriLakesSeniors.org](http://www.TriLakesSeniors.org).

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Our Community Calendar

By Judy Barnes,

Community Calendar Editor

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.

The unpredictability of the COVID-19 situation presents scheduling challenges to area governance entities and other organizations. Because OCN is a monthly publication, readers should assume that information published in this issue is subject to change and event information should be confirmed a day or two before the event by calling the information number or checking the organization's website.

Many entries show dates even though the event has been canceled or suspended. The date indicates when the event was planned to be held or when it would normally have been held.

GOVERNMENTAL BODIES

- **Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District Fire Chief Candidate Interviews**, Sat., **Dec. 5**, 9 a.m. (orientation at 8 a.m.), 166 2nd St., Monument. The public may view electronically only. For joining instructions visit [www.tlmfire.org](http://www.tlmfire.org) or contact Jennifer Martin, 719-484-0911.
- **Forest Lakes Metropolitan District & Pinon Pines Metropolitan District's 2 and 3 Board Meeting**, Mon, **Dec. 7**, 4 p.m., 2138 Flying Horse Club Dr. For general questions contact Ann Nichols, 719-327-5810, or email [anicholsduffy@aol.com](mailto:anicholsduffy@aol.com); for meeting updates visit [www.forestlakesmetrodistrict.com](http://www.forestlakesmetrodistrict.com).
- **Monument Board of Trustees Meeting, livestreamed at [bit.ly/2uZxjfa](http://bit.ly/2uZxjfa)**, Mon., **Dec. 7**, 6:30 p.m., Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Meets 1st and 3rd Mon. each month. To participate remotely by phone, call 1-844-992-4726 (Access Code: 126 084 9803). Info: 719-884-8017, [www.townofmonument.org](http://www.townofmonument.org).
- **El Paso Board of County Commissioners Meeting, live-streamed at [www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel](http://www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel)**, Tue., **Dec. 8**, 9 a.m. Centennial Hall, 200 South Cascade Ave., Suite 150, Colo. Springs. Meets every Tue. Info: 719-520-6430, [www.agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso/meeting/list](http://www.agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso/meeting/list).
- **Tri-Lakes Wastewater Facility Joint Use Committee Meeting**, Tue., **Dec. 8**, 10 a.m., 16510 Mitchell Ave. Meets 2nd Tue. each month. Info: Bill Burks, 719-481-4053.
- **Palmer Lake Sanitation District Board Meeting, call in only, check the website**; Wed., **Dec. 9**, 9 a.m., 120 Middle Glenway. Meets 2nd Wed. each month. Info: 719-481-2732. [www.plsd.org](http://www.plsd.org).
- **Monument Planning Commission Meeting**, Wed., **Dec. 9**, 6 p.m. Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Meets 2nd Wed. each month. Public attendance will be limited to remote attendance. To see the options for remote public participation in each meeting, visit [www.townofmonument.org/263/Planning-Commission-Board-of-Adjustment](http://www.townofmonument.org/263/Planning-Commission-Board-of-Adjustment). Info: 719-884-8017, [www.townofmonument.org](http://www.townofmonument.org).
- **Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District Board Meeting, meeting will be held via Zoom technology. For joining instructions visit <http://www.bffire.org> or contact 719-495-4300**. Wed., **Dec. 9**, 7 p.m., Station 1, 11445 Teachout Rd. Normally meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: 719-495-4300, [www.bffire.org](http://www.bffire.org).
- **Donala Water & Sanitation District Board Meeting, check the website for the access code for the electronic meeting**, Thu., **Dec. 10**, 1:30 p.m., 15850 Holbein Dr. Normally meets 3rd Thu. each month.

- Info: 719-488-3603, [www.donalawater.org](http://www.donalawater.org).
- **Triview Metropolitan District Board Meeting, check the website**, Thu., **Dec. 10**, 5:30 p.m., 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 300, Monument. Normally meets 3rd Thu. each month. Info: 719-488-6868, [www.triviewmetro.com](http://www.triviewmetro.com).
  - **Monument Academy School Board Meeting, Zoom meeting; email [Board@monumentacademy.net](mailto:Board@monumentacademy.net) and someone will respond with a meeting invitation. The audio will also be recorded and posted**. Thu., **Dec. 10**, 6 p.m., Lab 312, 1150 Village Ridge Point, Monument. Meets 2nd Thu. each month. Info: 719-481-1950, [www.monumentacademy.net/school-board](http://www.monumentacademy.net/school-board).
  - **Palmer Lake Town Board of Trustees Meeting**, Thu., **Dec. 10**, 6 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Meets 2nd Thu. each month. Info: 719-481-2953, [www.townofpalmerlake.com](http://www.townofpalmerlake.com).
  - **Woodmoor Water & Sanitation District Board Meeting**, Mon., **Dec. 14**, 1 p.m., 1845 Woodmoor Dr., Monument. Meets 2nd Mon. each month. Info: 719-488-2525, [www.woodmoorwater.com](http://www.woodmoorwater.com).
  - **Lewis-Palmer School District 38 Board Meeting, live stream on the district's YouTube channel: [www.youtube.com/user/LPSDCommunity](http://www.youtube.com/user/LPSDCommunity)**, Mon., **Dec. 14**, 6-10 p.m., Learning Center, 146 Jefferson St., Monument. Meets 3rd Mon. each month. The agenda and supporting documents can be found at <https://go.boarddocs.com/co/lewispalmer/Board.nsf/vpublic>. Info: 719-481-9546, [www.lewispalmer.org](http://www.lewispalmer.org).
  - **Wescott Fire Protection District Board Meeting, possible Zoom meeting, check the website**, Tue., **Dec. 15**, 4 p.m., Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Dr. Meets 3rd Tue. each month. Info: 719-488-8680, [www.wescottfire.org](http://www.wescottfire.org).
  - **Academy Water and Sanitation District Board Meeting, the public can join the Skype meeting: <https://join.skype.com/PAcujKTn7Nrh>. Check the website for a link: <https://academywsd.colorado.gov/notices-and-alerts>**. Wed., **Dec. 16**, 6 p.m., Wescott Fire Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Dr. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: 719-481-0711, <https://academywsd.colorado.gov>.
  - **Palmer Lake Town Planning Commission Meeting**, Wed., **Dec. 16**, 6 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: 719-481-2953, [www.townofpalmerlake.com](http://www.townofpalmerlake.com).
  - **Monument Sanitation District Board Meeting, check the website**, Wed., **Dec. 16**, 9 a.m., 130 2nd St. Meets 3rd Thu. each month. Info: 719-481-4886, [www.colorado.gov/msd](http://www.colorado.gov/msd).
  - **El Paso County Planning Commission Meeting, live-streamed at [www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel](http://www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel)**, Thu., **Dec. 17**, 1 p.m., 200 South Cascade Ave., Suite 150, Colo. Springs. Meets 1st & 3rd Thu. (if required) each month. Info: 719-520-6300, [elpasoco.com/public-meetings/](http://elpasoco.com/public-meetings/).
  - **Monument Board of Trustees Meeting, livestreamed at [bit.ly/2uZxjfa](http://bit.ly/2uZxjfa)**, Mon., **Dec. 21**, 6:30 p.m., Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Meets 1st and 3rd Mon. each month. To participate remotely by phone, call 1-844-992-4726 (Access Code: 126 084 9803). Info: 719-884-8017, [www.townofmonument.org](http://www.townofmonument.org).
  - **Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District Board Meeting, meeting will be held via Zoom technology. For joining instructions visit [www.tlmfire.org](http://www.tlmfire.org) or contact Jennifer Martin, 719-484-0911**. Wed., meeting held **Dec. 2**, 6:30 p.m., TLM-FPD Station 1, 18650 Hwy 105. Normally meets 4th Wed. each month. Info: Jennifer Martin, 719-484-0911, [www.tlmfire.org](http://www.tlmfire.org).

- **Woodmoor Improvement Association Board Meeting**, Wed., **Dec. 23**, 7 p.m., Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. Meets 4th Wed. each month. Info: 719-488-2693, [www.woodmoor.org](http://www.woodmoor.org).

WEEKLY & MONTHLY EVENTS

- **Group of Artists (GOA) Meetings at Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA), SUSPENDED**, Sat., **Dec. 5**, 10 a.m.-noon, 304 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Lively discussions about art topics, general studies on creativity. Meets 1st Sat. each month. Info: 481-0475, [info@trilakesarts.org](mailto:info@trilakesarts.org), [www.trilakesarts.org](http://www.trilakesarts.org).
- **Small Town Christmas at Covered Treasures Bookstore Booksigning**, Sat., **Dec. 5**, 105 Second St., Monument. 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Caroline Eklund will sign *Secrets of the Sacred Bluestones*; 1 p.m.-3 p.m. Terry Pierce will sign *Without Warning: The Saga of Gettysburg, A Reluctant Union Hero and the Men He Inspired*. Free, open to all, please wear a mask. Info: 481-2665, [www.coveredtreasures.com](http://www.coveredtreasures.com).
- **Monument Hill Kiwanis Club Breakfast Meeting, Zoom meeting. email [info@MHKiwanis.org](mailto:info@MHKiwanis.org) for details**; every Sat., 9 a.m., Guests are welcome at weekly meetings featuring speakers on a variety of topics and a free continental breakfast at normal meetings. Memberships open to the public. Join the 150+ men & women of the Tri-Lakes area who work together to make a difference for youth and our community. Info: RF Smith, 719-210-4987, [www.MHKiwanis.org](http://www.MHKiwanis.org). See ad on page 3.
- **Neighborhood Net**, every Sat., 10 a.m. Amateur radio operators practice for emergencies on weekly repeater nets so neighbors can help neighbors. Sign up at [www.mereowx.org/neighborhood-net](http://www.mereowx.org/neighborhood-net) or [contactus@mereowx.org](mailto:contactus@mereowx.org).
- **The Wine Seller Free Wine Tastings, SUSPENDED**, every Sat., 1-4 p.m., 2805 Roberts Dr., Monument. Info: 719-488-3019, [www.thewineseller.net](http://www.thewineseller.net).
- **Bingo by the American Legion, SUSPENDED**, every Sat., game sales start at 6 p.m., games start at 7 p.m., the Depot Restaurant, in Palmer Lake. Proceeds go to scholarships and other community support activities. Info: 719-481-8668, <http://legionpost9-11.org/>.
- **Lions Clubs Bingo, SUSPENDED**, every Sat., 10 a.m., and Wed., 7 p.m.; Carefree Bingo, 3440 N. Carefree Circle, Colo. Springs. Tri-Lakes Lions Club's portion of the proceeds benefit those in need in the Tri-Lakes Community. Info: Jim Nay-

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- lor, 719-481-8741 or [www.trilakeslionsclub.org](http://www.trilakeslionsclub.org)
- **Lucretia Vaile Museum, *closed for now***, 66 Lower Glenway St., Palmer Lake. Free. The museum houses items of local historical significance. Special displays rotate every 4-6 months. Info: 719-559-0837, [PLHS@PalmerDivideHistory.org](mailto:PLHS@PalmerDivideHistory.org).
  - **Artful Outdoors**, every **Sat.-Sun.**, 1-3 p.m. and by appointment. Join Janet for weekly art and nature talks and DIY art techniques at local nature and art spots. All ages, good social distancing, masks required, all outdoors for now. Limited to 5 at a time for now. Info: [janetsellers@ocn.me](mailto:janetsellers@ocn.me), [www.StartMy-Art.com](http://www.StartMy-Art.com).
  - **Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church, *The Table Online Worship livestreams at [tlumc.org/live](http://tlumc.org/live)*** every **Sun.**, 8 & 11 a.m. In-person communion service, 9:30 a.m., registration required. Registration & Info: 719-488-1365, [tlumc.org](http://tlumc.org). See ad on page 3.
  - **Fuel Church Sunday Service**, every **Sun.**, Connection 9:30-10 a.m., Service 10a.m., FB Live 10:40 a.m., Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Non-denominational, spirit-led. Info: [info@fuel.org](mailto:info@fuel.org), [www.fuelchurch.org](http://www.fuelchurch.org). See ad on page 11.
  - **Cathedral Rock Church Sunday Service, check the website for in-person and virtual services**, every **Sun.**, 10 a.m., Tri-Lakes YMCA, 17250 Jackson Creek Pkwy, Monument. Info & link to the YouTube channel: [www.cathedralrockchurch.org](http://www.cathedralrockchurch.org).
  - **Artfully Speaking Toastmasters, *Zoom Meeting ID: 313 403 101 Password: 168997***, every **Mon.**, 5:45 p.m., 4452 North Chestnut St., room 252, Colo. Springs. Guests welcome. Info: Glenn, 719-260-6551; [www.artfullyspeaking.toastmastersclubs.org](http://www.artfullyspeaking.toastmastersclubs.org).
  - **Women's A.A. Step Study, *meeting remotely, check for details***, every **Mon.**, 6:30 p.m., Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 Baptist Rd. Park in west lot. Info: 719-360-4306.
  - **Monument Life Recovery Group, *SUSPENDED, check the website***, every **Mon.**, 6:30-8 p.m., 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 provided for children under age 11. Info: 719-481-3600, [liferecoverygroups.com/meetings/life-recovery-group-3/](http://liferecoverygroups.com/meetings/life-recovery-group-3/).
  - **Monument Hill Kiwanis Bingo, *SUSPENDED***, every **Mon.**, 7:30 p.m., Carefree Bingo, 3440 N. Carefree Circle, Colo. Springs. All proceeds benefit those in need in the Tri-Lakes Community. Info: [bingo@mhkiwanis.org](mailto:bingo@mhkiwanis.org).
  - **Senior Citizen Luncheons, *Connections Café sites will have “grab and go” (prepared meals). A \$2.25 donation is requested. Please call 719-884-2300 to reserve your meal.*** Meals on Wheels and Home Delivered Meals will deliver frozen meals for the week to Monument on Wednesdays. Food Pantry offers a “pick up only” model for clients. **Mon.-Fri.**, 12-12:30 p.m., Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. See the menu for the month in the Senior Beat newsletter. Stay for bingo the 2nd Thu. each month. Reservations are requested, phone 719-884-2300.
  - **Western Museum of Mining & Industry (WMMI), *regular daily operations resumed***, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., 225 North Gate Blvd. (I-25 Exit 156 A). Tours now accommodate social distancing and Covid-19 safety standards. Retail gift shop is open. Special hour for vulnerable population is 9-10 a.m. Please call in advance. Cost: \$11 adults, \$10 military/AAA, \$9 seniors & students, \$6 children 3-12, free to children under 3 & museum members. Info: 719-488-0880, [info@wmmi.org](mailto:info@wmmi.org), [www.wmmi.org](http://www.wmmi.org).
  - **Tri-Lakes Silver Alliance Thrift Store, *now open*** every **Mon.-Sat.**, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., 755 Hwy 105, Suite N, in the West End Center. All proceeds support Tri-Lakes Senior Programs. Volunteers needed, phone 716-464-6873. To donate furniture, call 719-488-3495 for a pickup. Info: [www.TriLakesSeniors.org](http://www.TriLakesSeniors.org).
  - **Tri-Lakes YMCA Senior Coffee, *SUSPENDED***, every **Tue.**, 9:30-11:30 a.m., 17250 Jackson Creek Pkwy, Monument. Members and non-members are welcome. Socialize, have coffee and snacks in the front lobby. Free. Info: 719-630-2604, [hbrandon@ppymca.org](mailto:hbrandon@ppymca.org), [www.ppymca.org](http://www.ppymca.org).
  - **Adult Children of Alcoholics/Dysfunctional Families Meeting: ACA Promises**, every **Tue.**, 6:30-7:30 p.m. As a child, did you develop a false self in order to survive? See quiz at <https://adultchildren.org/newcomer/am-i-an-adult-child/>. The solution is learning to re-parent ourselves with gentleness, humor, love, and respect. Meeting both in small group in Monument (need RSVP) + online via Zoom. Call/text Stacey 206-384-8285 [www.adultchildren.org](http://www.adultchildren.org) (click on Newcomer).
  - **Al-anon Meeting: Monument Serenity, visit [www.al-anon-co.org](http://www.al-anon-co.org) to find on-line and phone meetings** every **Tue.**, 7:30-8:30 p.m., Ascent Church (formerly the Tri-Lakes Chapel), 1750 Deer Creek Rd., Monument. Info: Kay, 719-481-9258, [www.al-anon-co.org](http://www.al-anon-co.org).
  - **Essentrics Fitness Program at Senior Center**, every **Tue.** at 12:30 p.m. & **Thu.** at 8 a.m., Lewis-Palmer High School modular building across from the YMCA, on Jackson Creek Pkwy. Registration & Info: Sue Walker, 719-330-0241.
  - **Peak Reader Children's Literacy Program, *SUSPENDED***, every **Tue. & Thu.**, 5:30-6:30 p.m., Monument Branch Library, 1706 Lake Woodmoor Dr. Free one-to-one tutoring for children reading below grade level. To enroll your child or volunteer as a tutor, visit [www.childrensliteracycenter.org](http://www.childrensliteracycenter.org) or call 719-471-8672.
  - **Tri-Lakes Church of Christ Wednesday Night Fellowship Meal (Free) & Classes, *SUSPENDED***, every **Wed.**, 6-7:30 p.m., 20450 Beacon Lite Road, Monument (Corner of Beacon Lite & County Line Roads). Info: 488-9613, [gregsmith@trilakeschurch.org](mailto:gregsmith@trilakeschurch.org), [www.trilakeschurch.org](http://www.trilakeschurch.org).
  - **Al-anon Meeting: Letting Go, visit [www.al-anon-co.org](http://www.al-anon-co.org) to find on-line and phone meetings** every **Thu.**, 9-10:10 a.m., Ascent Church, 1750 Deer Creek Rd., Monument. Info: [www.al-anon-co.org](http://www.al-anon-co.org).
  - **A.A. Big Book Study, *Call 425-436-6200, access code 575176#*** every **Thu.**, 7 p.m., Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 W. Baptist Rd. Info: 719-481-0431.
  - **The Speedtrap offers Take Out**, 84 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Take out is available 8 a.m.-2 p.m. **daily**. Save time, order online. Gifts and gift cards available, too. Info: 719-488-2007, [www.speedtrapbistro.com](http://www.speedtrapbistro.com). See ad on page 5.
  - **Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS), *check website***, every **Fri.**, 8 a.m., Monument Chamber of Commerce, 166 2nd St., Monument. Info: Terry, 719-684-4912, or visit [www.TOPS.org](http://www.TOPS.org).
  - **Covered Treasures Bookstore Booksigning**, **Sat., Dec. 12**, 11-3 p.m., 105 Second St., Monument. 11 a.m.-1 p.m., M.J. Evans will sign *Mr Figgletoes' Toy Emporium* and various horse titles including trail guides in Colorado; 1-3 p.m., John Rabins will sign *Defined by Fire*. Free, open to all, please wear a mask. Info: 481-2665, [www.coveredtreasures.com](http://www.coveredtreasures.com).
  - **Chess Nuts**, **Tue., Dec. 8**, 5-9 p.m., Silver Alliance Senior Center, across the street from the YMCA. Any age, any skill. Learners welcome. Drop in and leave when you want. Bring your own board and pieces if you have them. Meets 2nd & 4th Tue. each month. Info: [www.TriLakesSeniors.org/chess](http://www.TriLakesSeniors.org/chess).
  - **Western Museum of Mining & Industry (WMMI) Lecture Series, *no lecture this month***, **Tue.**, 7-8 p.m., 225 North Gate Blvd. (I-25 Exit 156 A). RSVP & Info: 488-0880, [RSVP@wmmi.org](mailto:RSVP@wmmi.org), [www.wmmi.org](http://www.wmmi.org).
  - **Black Forest AARP Potluck Lunch & Meeting, *all in person AARP activities are canceled for the rest of 2020***, **Wed., Dec. 9**, 11:30 a.m., 12455 Black Forest Rd. All ages welcome. Meets 2nd Wed. each month. RSVP & Info: Stan, 596-6787, [www.aarp-chapter1100blackforest.weebly.com](http://www.aarp-chapter1100blackforest.weebly.com).
  - **Foot Care Clinic**, **Wed., Dec. 9**, Silver Alliance Senior Center located across the street from the Tri-Lakes YMCA, on the Lewis-Palmer High School campus. A registered nurse examines your feet and provides foot care advice, toenail trimming. Cost: \$30 for a 30-min. visit. Meets 2nd Wed., 3rd and last Fri. each month, by appointment only. Info & appointments: call the Visiting Nurse Association, 719-577-4448.
  - **Bridge, *SUSPENDED***, **Thu., Dec. 10**, 1-4 p.m., Silver Alliance Senior Center, 1300 Higby Rd., Monument. Meets 2nd Thu. each month, Sept.-June. Info: [www.trilakeseniors.org/programs/events.html](http://www.trilakeseniors.org/programs/events.html).
  - **Senior Bingo, *SUSPENDED***, **Thu., Dec. 10**, Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake, after the senior lunch. Come for lunch at noon, then stay and play. Free! Prizes! Meets 2nd Thu. each month. Info: Maggie Nealon, 719-488-3037.
  - **Tri-Lakes Chamber Monthly Education Series: *Speed Networking***, **Tue., Dec. 10**, 3:30-7:30 p.m., 166 Second St., Monument. One person per business for this event. Free event for members and non-members. Please register for virtual attendance information: [www.trilakeschamber.com](http://www.trilakeschamber.com). Info: 481-3282.
  - **Ben Lomond Gun Club, Tri-Lakes Chapter**, **Thu., Dec. 10**, 7 p.m., Tri-Lakes Fire Station 1, 18650 Hwy 105 west of Monument near the bowling alley. Meets 2nd Thu. each month. Info: 719-481-3364.
  - **Silver Center Book Club**, **Fri., Dec. 11**, 11 a.m.-noon, Senior Center located across the street from the Tri-Lakes YMCA, on Lewis-Palmer High School campus. The Dec. selection is “Nothing Daunted,” by Dorothy Wickenden. All are welcome. Meets 2nd Fri. each month. Coffee & snacks served. RSVP & Info: Sue, 719-330-0241.
  - **El Paso County Hazardous Materials & Recycling Collection Facility, *appointments required, phone 719-520-7878 or check the website to book online***, **Sat., Dec. 12**, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., 3255 Akers Dr., Colorado Springs. Open the 2nd Sat. each month as well as Mon.-Thu., 7 a.m.-5 p.m., accepts porcelain fixtures, common recyclable items, household hazardous waste, various electronics, and TVs up to 19-inch diagonal. Bring a nonperishable food item for Care and Share. Info: 719-520-7878, [communityservices.elpasoco.com/environmental-division](http://communityservices.elpasoco.com/environmental-division).
  - **Palmer Lake Art Group, *check the website***, **Sat., Dec. 12**, 9 a.m., Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. A variety of art programs are offered after the social gathering and business meeting. Guests welcome. Meets 2nd Sat. each month. Info: 719-460-4179, [www.palmerlakeartgroup.com](http://www.palmerlakeartgroup.com).
  - **Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group, *SUSPENDED***, **Sat., Dec. 12**, 9:45-11:30 a.m., The First National Bank of Monument, 581 Hwy 105. Meets 2nd Sat. each month. Info: Gail, 719-481-3711.
  - **Covered Treasures Bookstore Booksigning**, **Sat., Dec. 12**, 1-3 p.m., 105 Second St., Monument. John Fielder and Jeri Norgren will sign, *Colorado's Highest: The History of Naming the 14,000-Foot Peaks*. Free, open to all, please wear a mask. Info: 481-2665, [www.coveredtreasures.com](http://www.coveredtreasures.com).
  - **Gleneagle Sertoma Luncheon Meeting, *SUSPENDED***, **Wed., Dec. 16**, 11:30 a.m., Liberty Heights, 12105 Ambassador Dr., Colo. Springs. Interesting speakers and programs; all are welcome. Meets 1st & 3rd Wed. each month. Info: Garrett Barton, 719-433-5396; Duane Gritzmaker, 719-481-2424; [www.gleneaglesertoma.org](http://www.gleneaglesertoma.org).
  - **Senior Bingo**, **Wed., Dec. 16**, 1-2 p.m., Silver Alliance Senior Center, Lewis-Palmer High School campus. Masks required. Space is limited to 16 participants; RSVP required. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. RSVP & Info: Sue Walker, 719-464-6873, or email [sue@monumentalfitness](mailto:sue@monumentalfitness).
  - **Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7829, *via Zoom.com; POC Delbert Zehrung, 559-362-3223***, **Wed., Dec. 16**, 7 p.m., The Country Club at Woodmoor, 18945 Pebble Beach Way, Monument. New members welcome. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: Post Commander Joe Carlson, 405-326-2588, [jcarlson@vfw7829.org](mailto:jcarlson@vfw7829.org), [www.vfw7829.org](http://www.vfw7829.org).
  - **VFW Auxilliary to Post 7829, *meeting by videoconference***, **Wed., Dec. 16**, 7 p.m., The Country Club at Woodmoor, 18945 Pebble Beach Way, Monument. Guests are welcome to join; contact [carlsonmkc@aol.com](mailto:carlsonmkc@aol.com) for instructions on how to connect. If you are a male or female relative of a veteran who served on foreign soil during war or other military action, you may be eligible. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: Kathy Carlson, 719-488-1902, [carlsonmkc@aol.com](mailto:carlsonmkc@aol.com).
  - **Monumental Impact's Community of Support Collaborative, *virtual meeting***, **Thu., Dec. 17**, 4 p.m. Connect with other businesses involved in technology, engineering, and entrepreneurship or businesses/individuals with an interest in being the Community of Support to high school students in these career pathways connect with others. Register to receive connection details at [monumentalimpact.org/community/be-the-community-of-support](http://monumentalimpact.org/community/be-the-community-of-support).
  - **Palmer Lake Historical Society Meeting, *canceled for the rest of 2020***, **Thu., Dec. 17**, 7 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. All are welcome. Meets 3rd Thu. each month. Info: 719-559-0837, [www.palmerdividehistory.org](http://www.palmerdividehistory.org).
  - **Gleneagle Women's Club, *SUSPENDED***, **Fri., Dec. 18**. Come for lunch, book discussions, bridge, and more. Location for lunch varies. Meets every third Fri., Sept.-June. Info: Syble Krafft, 719-488-2669.
  - **Foot Care Clinic**, **Fri., Dec. 18**, Silver Alliance Senior Center located across the street from the Tri-Lakes YMCA, on the Lewis-Palmer High School campus. A registered nurse examines feet and provides foot care advice, toenail trimming. Cost: \$35 for a 30-min. visit. Meets 2nd Wed., 3rd and last Fri. each month, by appointment only. Info & appointments: call the Visiting Nurse Association, 719-577-4448.
  - **The Breakfast Club, *SUSPENDED***, **Sat., Dec. 19**, 8:30 a.m., The Ridge at Castle Pines North (Ridge Grill and Bar), 1414 Castle Pines Pkwy. Single people 50+ meet new friends and have fun. Meets 3rd Sat. each month. Info: 303-815-8428, [www.TBC-50plus.org](http://www.TBC-50plus.org).
  - **Tri-Lakes Parkinson's Disease Support Group, *SUSPENDED; if you need any help, please call Syble or Barry***, **Sat., Dec. 19**, 10 a.m.-noon, Monument Community Presbyterian Church, 238 Third St, Monument. Come for socializing, discussions on Parkinson's-related issues including available support, and occasional speakers. Meets 3rd Sat.



- each month. Info: Syble Krafft, 719-488-2669; Barry (group president), 719-351-9485.
- **Covered Treasures Bookstore Booksigning**, Sat., **Dec. 19**, 105 Second St., Monument. 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Nicole Musmanno will sign *The Lessons of Pi*; 1-3 p.m., Tara Stone will sign *6 Blocks Home*. Free, open to all, please wear a mask. Info: 481-2665, [www.coveredtreasures.com](http://www.coveredtreasures.com).
  - **Faithful Friends, no meeting this month**, Sat., **Dec. 19**, 3-4:30 p.m., 3254 Forest Lakes Dr., Monument. This friendly group engages in open conversation with different thought-provoking topics. RSVP & Info: Ellen, 303-526-5000.
  - **Grief Share Support Group**, Tue., **Dec. 29**, 10:30 a.m.-noon, Tri-Lakes Senior Center, across the street from the YMCA. The Tri-Lakes Silver Alliance has partnered with Colorado Palliative & Hospice Care to host a 13-session grief support group in Monument. Meets last Tue. each month. RSVP & Info: Sue Walker, 719-330-0241.
  - **Amateur Radio W0TLM (Tri-Lakes Monument Radio Association), check the website**, Mon., Dec. 21. All amateur radio operators or those interested in becoming amateur radio operators are welcome. Meets 3rd Mon. Check the website for details. Info: Joyce Witte, 719-661-9824, [Joycewitte@gmail.com](mailto:Joycewitte@gmail.com); [www.W0TLM.com](http://www.W0TLM.com).
  - **Chess Nuts**, Tue., **Dec. 22**, 5-9 p.m., Silver Alliance Senior Center, across the street from the YMCA. Any age, any skill. Learners welcome. Drop in and leave when you want. Bring your own board and pieces if you have them. Meets 2nd & 4th Tue. each month. Info: [www.TriLakesSeniors.org/chess](http://www.TriLakesSeniors.org/chess).
  - **Friends of Fox Run Park, no meeting Nov. or Dec.**, Southwinds Fine Art Gallery upstairs, 16575 Rollercoaster Rd. (corner of Baptist and Rollercoaster Roads). Join the growing group to learn about volunteering and supporting the park for safety, trails, trees, education, more. Guest speaker each month. Meets 4th Thu. each month. Info: 719-492-0355, [janetsellers@ocn.me](mailto:janetsellers@ocn.me).
  - **Senior Social, all AARP indoor activities SUSPENDED through Dec. 31**, Wed., 1-4 p.m., 12455 Black Forest Rd. Meets 4th Wed. each month except Nov. & Dec. Info: [aarpchapter1100blackforest.weebly.com](mailto:aarpchapter1100blackforest.weebly.com).
  - **Foot Care Clinic, canceled due to Christmas**, Fri., Silver Alliance Senior Center located across the street from the Tri-Lakes YMCA, on the Lewis-Palmer High School campus. A registered nurse examines feet and provides foot care advice, toenail trimming. Cost: \$35 for a 30-min. visit. Meets 2nd Wed., 3rd and last Fri. each month, by appointment only. Info & appointments: call the Visiting Nurse Association, 719-577-4448.
  - **Group of Artists (GOA) Meetings at Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA), SUSPENDED**, Sat., **Jan. 2**, 10 a.m.-noon, 304 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Lively discussions about art topics, general studies on creativity. Meets 1st Sat. each month. Info: 481-0475, [info@trilakesarts.org](mailto:info@trilakesarts.org), [www.trilakesarts.org](http://www.trilakesarts.org).
  - **Lupus Support Group**. If you suffer with an autoimmune disease and want to connect with others, you are welcome to join this group. Info: [dmbandle@hotmail.com](mailto:dmbandle@hotmail.com).
  - **Myasthenia Gravis Association** of Colorado Support Group. Location varies. Info: Carolyn, 488-3620, [www.4-mga.org](http://www.4-mga.org), 303-360-7080, [4mga@4-mga.org](mailto:4mga@4-mga.org).

SPECIAL EVENTS

- **Downtown Monument's Small Town Christmas**, Sat., **Dec. 5**, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., shop open houses and

- more. Santa with his reindeer and carolers will wander around town. Relax and warm up beside fire pits with hot cocoa, enjoy kids' activities, and feast at food trucks. Info: 719-481-2954.
- **Monument Tour de Lights**, Sat., **Dec. 12**, 3:30-6:30 p.m., Trails End Taproom, 252 Front St., Monument. Run, hike, and bike. This family-friendly event invites you to decorate yourself or your bike and come celebrate one of the darkest days of the year. Prizes will be given for best lights and decorations. Route will go up the Santa Fe Trail and back with hot drinks to follow (adult and kid). Leave anytime between 4:30 and 5:30 PM. Awards at 6:30 p.m. Info: [www.facebook.com/events/2718779051727291](http://www.facebook.com/events/2718779051727291).
  - **Annual Palmer Lake Yule Log Hunt**, Sun., **Dec. 13**, 1 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall (outside only), 28 Valley Crescent. Trek up the mountain in search of the Yule Log. Hunt participants should arrive 11 a.m.-noon. The winner will ride the Yule Log back to town and get the first cup of wassail. No indoor activities this year. Info: 481-2953.
  - **National Wreaths Across America Day**, Sat., **Dec. 19**, 10 a.m., Monument Cemetery, 800 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Remember and honor our veterans through the laying of remembrance wreaths on the graves of our fallen heroes. You can sponsor a veteran's wreath at Monument Cemetery. Visit [www.wreathscrossamerica.org](http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org) and click on "sponsor a specific cemetery" (under "Sponsor Wreaths"). Each wreath is only \$15. Info: Theresa Wiederspahn, 719-471-9900, or email [theresa.wiederspahn@dignitymemorial.com](mailto:theresa.wiederspahn@dignitymemorial.com); [www.wreathscrossamerica.org](http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org).
  - **Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church Christmas Eve Services**, Thu, **Dec. 24**, drive-in/outdoor with living nativity (weather permitting) 5 and 7 p.m.; online worship ([tlumc.org/live](http://tlumc.org/live)) 6 and 8 p.m., 20256 Hunting Downs Way, Monument. Info: 488-1365, [www.tlumc.org/christmas](http://www.tlumc.org/christmas). See ad on page 8.
  - **County's Annual TreeCycle**, Sat.-Sun., **Jan. 2-3**, or 9-10, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Baptist Road trailhead, Baptist Road & Old Denver Hwy. Recycle your Christmas tree. Trees are ground into mulch. Remove all decorations from your tree before dropping it off. Cost: \$5, benefits community youth sports programs. Info: 520-7878, [www.csyouthsports.net/treecycle](http://www.csyouthsports.net/treecycle).

*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*

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. 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.

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

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*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 call (719) 339-7831 or send the information to [calendar@ocn.me](mailto:calendar@ocn.me) or Our Community News, P.O. Box 1742, Monument, Colorado 80132.*

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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](mailto: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 Jennifer Kaylor, Managing Editor, at (719) 488-3455 or [editor@ocn.me](mailto: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. Depending on the space available, the number of letters printed in an issue may be limited to the first 12 received. Letters containing personal attacks or endorsements for or complaints about individually-named commercial products or services will not be published.

Look for our next issue Saturday, Jan. 2

Ad space reservations due: Fri., Dec. 11  
Finished ad artwork due: Fri., Dec. 18  
Letters to the editor due: Fri., Dec. 18  
Calendar items due: Fri., Dec. 25

Visit our website to read, download, and search all the back issues at [WWW.OCN.ME](http://WWW.OCN.ME)



Volunteers reporting on community issues in Monument, Palmer Lake, and the surrounding Tri-Lakes area

*OCN* is published on the first Saturday of each month by Colorado Cooperative Association  
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**(719) 488-3455—FAX: (828) 645-9022**

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*Our Community News* (*OCN*), with a circulation of over 21,600, is a unique all-volunteer monthly newspaper mailed FREE to every resident and business in the Tri-Lakes area. *OCN* is a primary source for Tri-Lakes area news that gives advertising preference to Tri-Lakes and Black Forest businesses. *OCN's* contract-free low ad rates and monthly publication schedule help stretch your ad budget while supporting an important Tri-Lakes-focused effort to present factual, comprehensive news to all Tri-Lakes area residents and business owners.

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