

Mar. 3 Presidential Primary Election Results

Final official results for El Paso County, updated March 18. Winning votes are shown in bold type.
Registered voters: 467,021. Ballots cast: 200,665 Total number precincts: 291. Voter turnout: 42.9%

Democratic Party results:

Cory Booker 146 (0.19%)
Tulsi Gabbard 1,201 (1.55%)
Bernie Sanders 28,259 (36.50%)
Elizabeth Warren 12,292 (15.87%)
Roque "Rocky" De La Fuente III 106 (0.14%)
Marianne Williamson 100 (0.13%)
Deval Patrick 27 (0.03%)

Michael R. Bloomberg 13,891 (17.94%)
Robby Wells 28 (0.04%)
Andrew Yang 503 (0.65%)
Joseph R. Biden 20,476 (26.44%)
Tom Steyer 361 (0.47%)
Rita Krichevsky 42 (0.05%)

Republican Party results:

Matthew John Matern 1,034 (0.95%)
Robert Ardini 484 (0.44%)
Joe Walsh 1,699 (1.56%)
Donald J. Trump 101,825 (93.57%)
Bill Weld 3,352 (3.08%)
Zoltan G. Istvan 434 (0.40%)

Colorado Estates neighborhood meeting, March 9

Neighbors help prepare for wildfire to come

By Lisa Hatfield

On March 9, neighbors in Colorado Estates gathered to make more wildfire readiness plans.

"There will be fire in our district. This is reality. In Monument, for sure," said Jamey Bumgarner, fire marshal and division chief of Community Risk for Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD). He talked with residents about the long history of fires in our area and actions they can take today to make themselves and their homes safer.

Tree-ring evidence shows that in "pre-settlement" conditions, fires came through every five to eight years and cleaned out the understory. But now that no fires are allowed, there is more and more fuel building up in all the forests around our homes, he said. This means residents must do the cleaning out work.

Bumgarner asked everyone to prepare their homes and properties now for "when the bad day" comes. "We will not have a fire engine parked in front of every home. There are 100 homes just in this one neighborhood," he said. Creating a moat of safe space around the home can make the difference if it is destroyed or not.

Fuel, weather, and topography dictate how wildfires burn. Each neighborhood has its own crazy road configurations, amount of fuels and vegetation, and house maintenance norms. Colorado Estates is like so many Palmer Divide neighborhoods, with dried-out south-facing slopes full of ponderosa pine and Gambel oak brush making it very vulnerable to fire, just like Black Forest and Waldo Canyon.

Getting flammable material away from your home is critical. When you make a defensible space envelope around your home, your house has a chance to defend itself!

- Make sure the roof is not flammable. Need Class A roof and assembly structure.
- Remove dry fuels leaves and pine straw from the gutters, under the front steps, and along the base of the house at least 15 feet out. Those "little things" make a big difference.
- Remove old boards or flammable material under the deck and in the yard.
- Do the work to maintain the vegetation in the 30-foot "home ignition zone" around your house. This will stop the fire creeping through combustible stuff toward your house.
- Ember showers will blow into corners and smolder. But if they just land on bare earth or rock, they will die of starvation.
- Cut back flammable vegetation on both sides of the driveway egress to demonstrate to firefighters that you've done mitigation and that it might be safe for them to enter your property.

See "Residents Reducing Wildfire Risk" www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/



Above: On March 9, Colorado Estates neighborhood organizer Becky Zitterich said, "We're Black Forest waiting to happen. When a fire comes through here, it won't be a matter of just thinning anymore because all the trees will be gone." The group is brainstorming ways to help each other make their neighborhood safer. Two neighborhood slash chipping days are scheduled for 2020. Photo by Lisa Hatfield.

Firewise-USA.

Visualize this: When a 10-foot scrub oak tree catches fire, the flames will be 30 feet high, and with a 40-mile-an-hour wind blowing it, "the flames could lick the side of your house." You need to cut scrub oak at least 30 feet back from the house and out from under pine trees.

Dry grass is a critical fire carrier too, shown in the Mile Marker 117 and Carson-Midway Fires in 2018. Bumgarner has seen how "spot fires" blew miles ahead of these fires. They burned 40,000-60,000 acres in one day. The lesson? "Keep the grass mowed around your home." This will help create a fuel-free zone at least 5 feet wide around the house.

Colorado Estates also has a dizzying maze of roads but very few exit routes. The residents discussed the lack of egress routes from their neighborhood and how, in some cases, they might need to drive through a back yard or a field instead of a road. Bumgarner reminded them how black with smoke the air can get during a fire, making daytime feel like dark of night. "During the Black Forest Fire, I could not see the hood of my truck, there was so much smoke." It's easy to lose your bearings then. "We had to use a GPS to find intersections that were right next to us."

Bumgarner's assessment of Colorado Estates was that the narrow roads had pine trees reaching across them and scrub oak right up to the edges, and they would not make good fire breaks in their current condition. They might not even be passable if they were on fire, he said. "It's very tight. A bad scenario."

He said all property owners who do their own work (or hire out the work) should document the time and money spent and save receipts for possible tax breaks or grant money matching funds.

When a neighborhood earns Firewise USA Community designation, it doesn't mean you are done, but it gives a roadmap for what you ought to be working toward together as a group effort. He applauded Red Rock Ranch, west of Monument, that is setting a great example with its efforts to become more Firewise. See www.ocn.me/v18n12.htm#photos.

Bumgarner said everyone needs to take personal responsibility to create a state of readiness for their family's evacuation plans and for their ongoing home and property maintenance. Ready, Set, Go! has lists of ideas for people to work on to help get things in order just in case.

It is vitally important to have a family communications and emergency plan.

- You must register all your cell phones and addresses with the Peak Alerts System so they can notify you with a Reverse 9-1-1 notification. Go to <https://elpasoteller911.org>. (This is different from Amber Alerts and is not automatic.)
- Tell all family members where your secondary meeting place will be if you can't get back home. Phone lines will fail during emergencies, so you can't coordinate it all then. Do it now.
- Make copies of important documents, family photos, and home inventory photos. Store them with a friend in another town for safety.
- Read the Ready, Set, Go! website for ideas to prepare for blizzards, wildfire risk reduction, quarantine for pandemics or toxic spills, and evacuations.
- Here's the Woodmoor-specific version that can help all residents of northern El Paso County: www.woodmoor.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/WIA-ActionPlanBooklet_PROOF4.pdf
- If you sense danger, just go! Don't wait for the Reverse 9-1-1 call.
- Do you know at least three routes out of your neighborhood?
- If you evacuate, please check in at the evacuation center for accountability to let first responders know you're already safe.

On Sept. 26, the Office of Emergency Management is planning to conduct an evacuation exercise for residents of northwestern El Paso County, Bumgarner said. Watch for more information so you can sign up to learn from this demonstration.

Our Community News's coverage area includes four fire districts. Which one do you live in? See the fourth map at www.ocn.me/maps.htm. Call your district for details about Firewise lot evaluations and other resources and community classes they can share with taxpayers who want to improve their safety.

- Black Forest Fire/Rescue PD www.bffire.org
- Tri-Lakes Monument FPD <http://tlmfire.org/>
- Palmer Lake Volunteer FD www.townofpalmerlake.com/fire
- Wescott FPD <http://wescottfire.org/>

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