

Our Community News

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



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Read, download, and search all the OCN back issues at www.ocn.me.

Safer at Home

For up to date information on this changing situation, see <https://covid19.colorado.gov/blog/safer-at-home>. The goal is still for the general public to stay home unless it's absolutely necessary to go out. Certain businesses may open now but with strict precautions. It's a new level of safety that still includes keeping your distance, wearing a mask when in public, and limiting size of gatherings to less than ten people. The El Paso County Public Health Department still wants you to be Safer at Home.

For daily Colorado COVID-19 updates and other information, see <https://covid19.colorado.gov/case-data>. El Paso County's data is at www.elpasocountyhealth.org/services/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19.

Community resources: dial 2-1-1 or visit 211Colorado.org and www.elpasocountyhealth.org/community-resources-0. Health info: 719-575-8888.

Local Events

Almost all local events have been 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 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.

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.

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Honoring medical workers



National Nurse Day May 6 was the day to give even more encouragement for medical workers. Members of Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church connected with Penrose Main Hospital to arrange a donation of 100 lunches and a few artful posters for the ER and the cafeteria. This is just one example of the many citizens in the Tri-Lakes area who have made signs of support and donated homemade masks to help support health care workers. **Above:** Penrose-St. Francis Health Services Public Information Officer Andrea Sinclair and Diana Adkins, RN, who coordinates the atrial fibrillation clinic at Colorado Springs Cardiology, displayed a poster showing Wonder Woman wearing a medical face mask, in honor of all the sacrifices made by nurses and doctors. To donate, arrange with Sinclair at 719-776-5050. *Photo by Margie Frostman.*

Lewis-Palmer District 38 Board of Education, May 19

Board hears report from Monument Academy, discusses budget decisions

By Harriet Halbig

Monument Academy (MA) board President Mark McWilliams reported on the construction of MA's new middle/high school under construction at the intersection of Highways 105 and 83 during the May 19 meeting of the Lewis-Palmer District 38 Board of Education. The board also discussed budget decisions in this time of the coronavirus pandemic.

Aimee Clode, project manager for the school, said that despite bad weather and the coronavirus pandemic in the spring, construction is on schedule and under budget. She said that activity now includes elevator installation, drywall installation, painting, and other finishing activities. The lockers will soon be installed.

Clode said that sufficient funding from the contingency fund could allow for additional outdoor purchases such as basketball hoops and landscaping.

McWilliams encouraged members of the board to visit the site two at a time due to COVID restrictions

McWilliams also reported that MA is working with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to finalize plans for ingress and egress from the site.

Board Treasurer Ron Schwarz asked what the schedule would be for

teachers and students to enter the new facility.

Chief Operating Officer Christiana Herrera replied that teacher training would be held at the current campus on Highway 105 until the certificate of occupancy is obtained to allow staff into the new structure. She said that storage containers will be rented for the furniture for the new building so that it may be moved in quickly.

Herrera said that the two facilities would allow for MA to maintain sufficient social distancing once school is in session. She said she hopes not to need to use modular classrooms if the certificate is delayed.

The MA calendar calls for an opening date of Aug. 29 and it is hoped that the property will be turned over to the school two weeks prior.

Herrera also reported that there is currently a hiring freeze on all new assistant principals and some other administrative personnel to maintain the budget.

Many middle school teachers are also qualified to teach high school classes. Middle School Principal Julie Seymour will teach in the fall in addition to Herrera herself. A Latin and history teacher has been hired for the high school.

MA School Board, May 6

Board approves 10% budget cut, cancels raises

By Jackie Burhans

The Monument Academy (MA) School Board held its regular board meeting on May 6 online to approve a preliminary budget, plan for next year, and hear an update from the School Accountability and Advisory Committee (SAAC.)

2020-21 budget cuts

MA Chief Operating Officer Christiana Herrera shared communication from D38 Superintendent Dr. KC Somers regarding state funding for education. She said there were discussions ranging from a 1% to 10% or even up to a 20% decrease. The state is projecting a \$3 billion deficit in its budget; education is a large part of the state budget so there will be deep cuts. Herrera said that voting for an MA budget with a 10% decrease would be the conservative vote and that MA will need to dip into reserves but wants to maintain enough reserves for at least two years.

She noted that a 10% decrease would mean a hiring freeze and no salary increases but would avoid salary decreases or loss of employment. She said the budget would have to be amended at some point in the future. Herrera noted that MA is in a better position than some schools because it has a rainy-day fund.

D38 (Cont. on 2)

MA (Cont. on 4)