

Issue #250 — Volume 21 Number 12 — Saturday, December 4, 2021

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## Local Events

- Readers should assume that event information published in this issue is subject to change and information should be confirmed a day or two before the event by calling the information number or checking the organization's website.
- See pages 28-31 for event locations and other details of these and many other local events.
- First Annual Trails End Christmas Market, Fri.-Sun., Dec. 3-5
  - Kiwanis Monument Hill Club - North Pole Craft Fair, Sat., Dec. 4, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
  - Monument Small Town Christmas, Sat., Dec. 4, 10 a.m.- 6 p.m.
  - Monument Tree Lighting, Sat., Dec. 4, 3-5 p.m.
  - Kiwanis Monument Hill Club, Colorado Gives Day, Tue., Dec. 7
  - Tip a Cop, Thu., Dec. 9, 5-9 p.m.
  - Southwinds Fine Art Holiday Art Sale, Fri.-Sun. Dec. 10-12
  - O Holy Night Christmas concert, Fri., Dec. 10, 7 p.m.
  - Friends of Fox Run Park annual tree "wood cookie" ornament party, Sat., Dec. 11, 1-3 p.m.
  - Palmer Lake Annual Yule Log Hunt, Sun, Dec. 12, 1 p.m.
  - Monument Santa on Patrol, Toys should be dropped off by Mon., Dec. 13, 5 p.m.
  - Northern Delivery System meeting, Wed., Dec. 15, 5:30 p.m.
  - Woodmen Valley Chapel: Christmas Eve Services, Fri., Dec. 24, 11 a.m., 1 p.m., 3 p.m., and 5 p.m.
  - Christmas Eve at Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church, Fri., Dec.24, 5 p.m., 7 p.m., and 9 p.m.

## In this issue

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**Circulation**  
Print Run: 22,160  
Mail Delivery: 21,521  
Stacks: 639



**Above:** This photograph was taken from the east side of Palmer Lake after this year's Palmer Lake Star Lighting Nov. 27. Please see page 28 for more details about the Palmer Lake Fire Department's annual chili supper and Star lighting. *Photo by Steve Pate.*

### Monument Board of Trustees Special meeting Nov. 3

## Raises built into 2F fund for police; disparities in raises questioned

*By Allison Robenstein*  
During the special Monument Board of Trustees meeting held Nov. 3, the board discussed pay raises for town employees and police, as well as retirement benefits. One trustee admitted during public meeting time that she and an on-duty police officer violated the rules government employees must follow regarding elections.

Trustee Laurie Clark was noted absent by Town Clerk Laura Hogan.

**Police funding approved by voters**  
Monument voters passed the 2F ballot initiative which will add a .5 percent

additional sales tax at the first of the year. Ballot issue 2F states that sales taxes will increase \$1.65 million in 2022 through the imposition of an additional 0.5 percent sales tax. With a vote of 2,061 for and 1,252 against, the initiative passed.

Town Manager Mike Foreman explained that the 2022 police department budget will include a \$2.6 million transfer from the General Fund into a specially created fund specific to 2F revenues. Foreman reminded the board the needs of the police will not be met all at once since revenues will funnel into the town over the year.

**2F (Cont. on 2)**

### Monument Board of Trustees Meeting, Nov. 17

## Unprecedented 10 percent raise for town employees; rules on remote attendance overridden

*By Allison Robenstein*  
During the Nov. 17 meeting, the Monument Board of Trustees directed Town Manager Mike Foreman to make it possible to pay 10 percent raises to all departments in 2022. Higby Road was annexed into the town and a public safety resolution was passed.

Trustee Laurie Clark and Mayor Pro Tem Kelly Elliott attended remotely. During their June 7 meeting, the board decided each trustee would only get one chance to participate remotely for the rest of this year and two chances in 2022. Additionally, during that vote, the board decided quasi-judicial decisions must be made in person. Clark had already used her one remote par-

ticipation in July.

Don Wilson and the board decided to vacate the previous decision for tonight's meeting. Nothing was said about Clark's second virtual attendance. She and Elliott were allowed to vote remotely.

**Budget discussion**  
The board will consider the 2022 budget at the Dec. 6 meeting. In the meantime, the board has directed staff to pay raises of 10 percent. At first, just the police department was to get a 10 percent raise as Town Manager Mike Foreman and Police Chief Sean Hemingway informed the board they had built in a raise for all officers. Clark said she is in

### Lewis-Palmer D-38 Board of Education, Nov. 15

## Members take oath of office, student voices regarding No Place for Hate, budget discussion

*By Harriet Halbig*  
Continuing board members Chris Taylor and Tiffiney Upchurch swore their oath of office at the Nov. 15 meeting of the board of education. Members of the board will continue to serve in their current capacity: President Chris Taylor, Vice President Theresa Phillips, Secretary Tiffiney Upchurch, Treasurer Ron Schwarz, and Director Matthew Clawson. In addition, Vicki Wood will be assistant secretary and Kitte Overton will be assistant treasurer.

Taylor and Upchurch ran unopposed, and the district did not participate in this year's election. They will each serve an additional four-year term.

**Student voices: No Place for Hate**  
Superintendent KC Somers introduced a group of students from Lewis-Palmer Middle School who had recently completed training as peer ambassadors in *No Place for Hate*, a program developed by the Anti-Defamation League to eradicate bias and acts of hate among individuals.

Through the use of exercises, the students encouraged individuals to stop, think, feel, and act when confronted with acts of bias. Members of the board were given single sentence statements to read which displayed acts of bias or discrimination. Among





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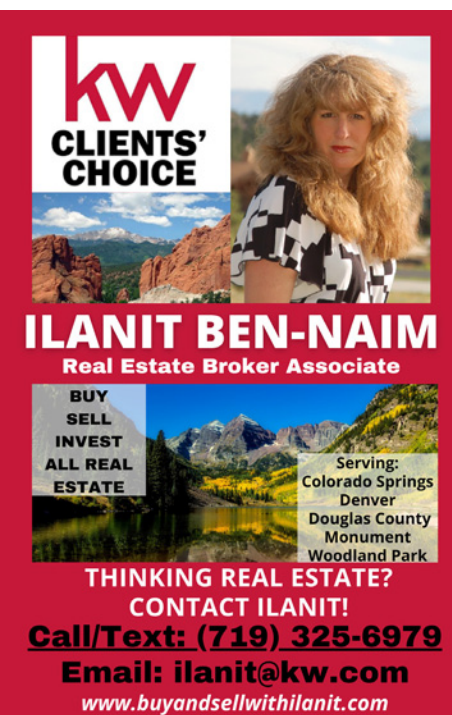
The concert is free as always, and we will again be accepting donations to benefit Tri-Lakes Cares.

**2F (Cont. from 1)**  
**Disparities in raises questioned**  
Initially, Foreman asked the board to approve a 5 percent increase for em-

ployees and a 3 percent increase to their retirement fund. His plan is to give employees a 5 percent raise for the next five years while also increasing their benefits. He noted municipalities near Monument will be giving a 3 to 5 percent raise to police officers. Foreman asked the board to maintain reserves at 13.08 percent, which is close to the 15 percent as recommended by the Government Finance Officers Association and to build up the town's coffers.

Chief Sean Hemingway said town police participate in the same retirement plan as all other employees, whereas other municipalities allow peace officers to participate in the Fire and Police Pension Association (FPPA) for retirement. The benefits of the FPPA are numerous including a pooled benefit plan and death and disability insurance. Although Trustee Jim Romanello said he is in favor of a pension, Trustee Ron Stephens was against it, noting pensions "are not as safe and secure," as other retirement programs.

Hemingway informed the board, "When I built a 10 percent increase



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into the 2F budget, I looked at what my colleagues were talking about nationwide and throughout the state."

Mayor Don Wilson seemed a bit surprised asking, "Have we ever discussed this 10 percent [raise]?", then saying, "I don't recall this ten percent coming up before. It feels like a bait and switch kind of thing."

Hemingway didn't fully answer the mayor's question, simply saying recent salary surveys showed disparities between the town and other municipalities early on.

While all other employees would have received a 5 percent raise, the officers will see an automatic 10 percent raise. Stephens said he would be in favor of backpedaling ballot language promised to the voters, suggesting rather than hiring eight officers only bringing in seven officers providing the raise in police salaries. Fore-

man again said the 10 percent raise is built into the 2F funds, so the town can still hire the eight. Wilson suggested maybe the problem with losing officers is the industry itself versus salary levels, asking if there is any proof that salary increases will help to retain police.

Foreman and Hemingway consistently dwelled on keeping police officers, but Public Works Director Tom Tharnish said he also has trouble keeping employees. Hemingway pointed out that the two departments work well together.

Several town employees who spoke during public comments also seemed surprised that the police will be getting double the pay raise that they will receive. Assistant Public Works Director Stephen Sheffield, and Monument Landscape Supervisor Cassie Olgren said they appreciate the need for competitive police department salaries, but other

departments, including the public works department employees, see salaries far below those of municipalities surrounding the town.

Foreman said the town could give all employees a 10 percent raise with a reduction in the unreserved balance. He noted town employees fall into a merit-based system.

Hemingway complained that Monument officers must pay their way to the police academy, similar to someone paying for college and then entering the workforce, including taking out loans to pay for the program.

Later in the meeting though, he noted the El Paso County Sheriff's Office provide supplemental assistance for some or all the town's officers who attend the police academy through in-kind services.

To show her support of the police department Trustee Darcy Schoening said she

spent the Friday before the election on a lengthy ride along with an officer in uniform. She admitted, "We even knocked on doors for 2F." Since 1939, employees are barred from such actions as it could be misconstrued as coercion, especially by an officer in uniform and a trustee. A second officer spoke later during public comments saying he also knocked on voters' doors to convince them to vote for the ballot measures but did not say whether he was on or off duty at the time.

During public comment Joe Lusty asked again how the historic Triview intergovernmental agreement (IGA) would not affect the 2F revenues. Since its inception, Triview Metropolitan District has received half of all town sales tax. Lusty said, "I don't know how you can do that legally, but there must be a method." Wilson said Triview would

have to ignore the voters who approved 2F.

The meeting adjourned at 7:21 pm.

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

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**MONUMENT (Cont. from 1)**

favor of "at least" a 10 percent raise. Foreman asked the board to approve changes to the employee 457 retirement plan too. See BOT special meeting article on page 1.

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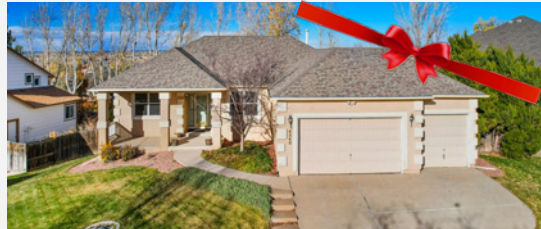
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Trustee Ron Stephens suggested removing a \$40,000 budget request for a state lobbyist. He made the argument that because Democrats in the state won't listen to the town's trustees the money is better spent contributing to the 457 plan. Clark agreed verbally, but then voted down the request. Schoening disagreed though, saying a state lobbyist would advocate for the town and could negotiate with the Democrats to see the town's point of view. The request passed 4-3 with Schoening, Wilson, and Clark voting against.

### Higby Road annexed into the town

After a public hearing, Higby Road was annexed into the town. The section of road is from I-25 to the east-

ern edge of the future Home Place Ranch development. The road had previously been maintained by El Paso County. According to the board packet, "the annexation will facilitate an improvement project to be coordinated with Triview Metropolitan District and the Jackson Creek North Filing Nos. 3-6 and Home Place Ranch developments." Previously, these developments could not access Higby Road because it needed improvements.

Though the cost of improvements is not known, the town will require the developers to pay a fair share portion of the total. Design of the roadway will include three roundabouts at Bowstring Road, Fairplay Drive, and Furrow Road, which is being extended to Higby.

Triview will maintain the roadway through an inclusion agreement. This will allow the Sept. 22, 1987, intergovernmental agreement (IGA) for roadway obligations to be enforced. Triview pays for these obligations by collecting half of all sales taxes. According to ballot language, this does not include the new 2F revenues.

The annexation was unanimously approved. La-Kind voted against the Triview inclusion.

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**Public safety resolution non-binding**  
Town Attorney Joseph Rivera brought a resolution to the board for approval intended to show its commitment to public safety. So that future board members know the intent of the 2F revenue, this board approved a non-binding policy position as a record of reasoning. Revenue from the approved ballot issue will be placed into a separate fund to be used as a supplement to the police operating budget. Mayor Don Wilson said the police will continue to get funding from the General Fund just as all departments do. Not all town departments have a separate fund used to supplement their budgets. Others like the 2A Water Fund, which is to be used solely for new water, is dipped into for new building purchases.

**Public comments**  
Resident Ken Kimple thanked Planning Director Megghan Herington for all her help in clarifying town process. He noted scrub oak that grows on town-owned land needs to be cleaned up as a buffer from fire protection. Kimple and other Promontory Pointe residents have complained publicly about speeding. Tonight, Kimple asked for roundabouts on Gleneagle that won't affect any residential property. Resident Steve King, one of nine residents who will work on the Home Rule committee, said the westside feels underrepresented. Assistant Public Works Director Stephen Sheffield thanked the board for the pay ad-

justments for staff, noting this is a big issue for public works employees.  
*Allison Robenstein can be reached at [allisonrobenstein@ocn.me](mailto:allisonrobenstein@ocn.me)*

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Monument Planning Commission Work Session, Nov.10

Maximum allowable building height and Higby Road designs discussed

By Kate Pangelinan

The Nov.10 Monument Planning Commission (PC) meeting was another work session. That means no proposed site plans, plats, rezones, etc. were approved or rejected for recommendation to the Board of Trustees (BOT). Instead, the PC heard a presentation about plans for Higby Road, asked questions, and continued discussions from the work session held in October.

Planning Director Meggan Herington was present at the meeting, along with Planner II Debbie Flynn and Planning Technician Theresa Rust.

**Information and Relevant Links**

This article was written referring to a draft of the meeting's minutes submitted by Theresa Rust, currently available online at [monumenttownco.documents-on-demand.com](http://monumenttownco.documents-on-demand.com). The minutes will later be considered for approval by the PC, and once any potential amendments are made and a vote passed, will no longer be designated as a draft.

The site [monumenttownco.documents-on-demand.com](http://monumenttownco.documents-on-demand.com) is also a good place to find explanatory packets and agendas for both PC and BOT meetings.

Many PC meetings are available to watch in their entirety on the town's YouTube page at [youtube.com/channel/UCdFL08UcqZfFdkio5jT6GDA](http://youtube.com/channel/UCdFL08UcqZfFdkio5jT6GDA). Citizens may find it easier to search for "Town of Monument" or "Monument Planning Commission" in YouTube's search bar. The Nov. 10 meeting is not available to watch in this way.

According to the town's website, planning staff can be contacted by calling 719-481-2954 or sending an email to [planning@tomgov.org](mailto:planning@tomgov.org).

**Higby Road**

As stated in that draft of the meeting's minutes, "Triview Metro District spoke about the proposed Higby Road design presented by John Merritt." Further discussion and PC questions followed, including subjects such as:

- The future of traffic in the area, including traffic potentially generated by the elementary school expected to be built in the Home Place Ranch subdivision.
- Sidewalk size and student access around Lewis-Palmer High School.
- Plans and possibilities for construction and signalization involving other roads.

**Maximum allowable building height**

Flynn provided information including a map that illustrates what little land remains to be affected by any changes in the town's code regarding maximum allowable building height. Commissioner Cathy Green suggested a height limit of 50 feet instead of the previously proposed maximum allowable height of 75 feet to the west of I-25. Efforts will be made to see if "having a Town height limit of no higher than 50 feet," as stated in the draft minutes, can be added to the Municipal Code.

**Other items**

Staff is going to create another map for the PC, detailing where tractor trailers can legally be used. This is at the request of Commissioner Daniel Ours. Further discussions about industrial areas in Monument are expected including at the next PC meeting. Land developer Tony Peck introduced himself during the public comments portion of the meeting, explaining that he plans to apply for a spot on the planning commission.

\*\*\*\*\*

There is expected to be another PC work session next month on Dec. 8 at 6:00 p.m. in the Monument Town Hall. According to the posted agenda, this will be a combination work session and public hearing, meaning that items will be voted on for recommendation to the BOT first, followed by another work session discussion.

Kate Pangelinan can be reached at [katepangelinan@ocn.me](mailto:katepangelinan@ocn.me).

D-38 BOE (Cont. from 1)

these was a Black student who entered an Advanced Placement class and was told by the teacher that he must be in the wrong class. There were also anecdotes involving transgender or homosexual students. When asked how these statements made the members feel, they said they felt unwanted and intimidated.

Students described a pyramid of behaviors demonstrating escalating acts of bias and hatred starting from the most common acts of stereotyping and seeking like-minded people through acts of bias such as insensitive remarks and social avoidance to systemic discrimination such as housing segregation. Other examples of bias motivated violence such as arson and vandalism and in the extreme, genocide.

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**Above:** At its Nov. 15 regular board meeting the Lewis-Palmer D38 Bour of Education recognized first responders from the community. From left to right are: Superintendent KC Somers, district Chief of Safety and Security Dennis Coates, Palmer Ridge High School Resource Officer Cory Adkisson, Woodmoor Pubic Safety Chief Kevin Nielsen, Palmer Lake Police Chief Jason Vanderpool, Monument Police Chief Sean Hemingway and Sargeant Timothy Johnson, and board Vice President Theresa Phillips. Not shown are Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District Chief Andy Kovacs, Palmer Lake Fire Department Chief Christopher McCarthy, Lewis-Palmer School Resource Officer Chad Wheat, Palmer Ridge High School Resource Officer and Monument Academy Resource Officer Deputy Josie Haag. *Photo by Jackie Burhans*

Security Dennis Coates.

**Superintendent Update**

Somers spoke briefly of the recent school-related shootings at high schools in Aurora, where he used to live, saying that such events are happening too often in this country and that he was glad that District 38 is invested in taking care of each other. At a previous meeting he had also commented on violent protests at school board meetings elsewhere in the country and his gratitude that citizens in this district try to work together toward a common goal.

Somers reported that students recently responded to a climate survey for grades 3 through 12. Responses are being compiled and he hopes to report at the December meeting.

He praised the Lewis-Palmer Middle School presentation and said that the school is committed to social-emotional learning, learning self-management skills, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making.

Somers said that he and other superintendents are in touch with county health officials regarding possible new guidance, not necessarily resulting in new restrictions. He said that the availability of vaccines for younger children make quarantining less frequent.

Somers reported on recent ac-

tivity reflecting the five goals of the long-term strategic plan. Among these was, in response to priority 2, offering a world-class education. The district leadership team is in the process of visiting each school to see how they respond to the plan. The most recent visit was to Ray Kilmer Elementary where there are specific learning zones, classrooms where students can get additional help in a specific subject area during the school day.

Regarding priority 3, deepening professional learning, Somers said that a new effort to offer support to new teachers and administrators is proving successful and that the administration

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has heard staff presentations about compensation.

Regarding priority 4, effective asset management and use of resources, Somers reported that the district is reviewing applications for membership in the Financial Advisory Committee.

Priority 5 involves internal and

community communication. There will be a post-board meeting recap newsletter emailed to stakeholders and there is now a D-38 news website.

**Priority 4 update**

Chief Financial Officer Overton and Somers spoke of the process of creating a new budget for the school year. Overton referred to an exercise during the board work session on Nov. 2 where board members were asked to prioritize use of available funds in support of the strategic plan without using dollar amounts. They were asked how the success of each initiative could be evaluated. This exercise was based on the fact that 80 percent of the district budget is devoted to compensation. Some of the additional funds have to be held in reserve due to TABOR requirements and bond servicing.

Following a brief recap of the draft budget, Overton said that short-term emphasis is on current per-pupil revenue and enrollment figures and the tax climate in the state and district. When designating the use of revenue, its

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source must be considered. Some revenue, such as that resulting from COVID sources, is short-term and cannot be designated for continuing uses such as salaries. When considering some expenditures, such as new curriculum, it must be determined whether this is a new purchase or a replacement of a

previous curriculum. Long-term planning involves examination of trends in such areas as population growth and state funding. Treasurer Ron Schwarz suggested that in the interest of transparency, perhaps the terminology on the budget could be clarified in lay terms. For ex-

ample, instead of designating available funds as “unassigned,” it could be designated as “savings.” The board approved several policy revisions and passed the consent agenda. \*\*\*\*\* The D-38 Board of Education usu-

ally meets on the third Monday of the month at the district learning center, 146 Jefferson St. Monument. Due to the holiday break, the December meeting will be on Dec. 13. Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me

Monument Academy School Board, Nov.11

# Monument Academy high school principal resigns

By Jackie Burhans The Monument Academy (MA) school board met on Nov. 11 at the east campus music room to discuss the resignation of the high school principal, hear updates on the phase 2 project, and recognize a member of the MA community. Parents spoke during the public comments on both topics. The board met in executive session after amending it to include a discussion of confidential student information regarding a parent grievance.

Principal resigns mid-year Board President Ryan Graham, speaking for himself and not the entire board, said he was notified on Nov. 5 of the sudden resignation of MA's beloved east campus principal, Julie Seymour. He said she was an integral part of MA for the past 12 years



Julie Seymour

and that all are saddened that she left. She served in the role of teacher at the pre-kindergarten and middle school before moving into administration. He said the board is aware that when a key leadership person resigns in the middle of a school year, there will be rumors and accusations. He said he had numerous conversations including speaking directly with Seymour to ask if there was anything the board could do to get her to reconsider. She emphatically stated no and said that her res-

ignation was for personal reasons, he said. In discussing the plan going forward, Chief Operating Officer (COO) Merlin Holmes indicated that he planned to hire an interim administrator who would work with the two existing assistant principals to manage the campus for the rest of the year. He indicated he did not want to use the term principal, in part to avoid looking like they would be replacing Seymour or setting the expectation that the position would be permanent. Holmes noted that the best time for hiring is in February and March when the pool of applicants would be larger.

During public comments a parent noted that she was not alone in her sadness over Seymour's resignation, saying she appreciated her sincerity as a person and her compassion and fair-mindedness as a leader. She noted that Seymour and the Exceptional Student Services (ESS) team helped to create an atmosphere which nurtured students with learning disabilities who were on individualized education (IEP) or 504 plans. She expressed concern that she had heard that a teacher had resigned in November and was told by the teacher that the COO had talked him into staying by agreeing to the stipulation that the teacher would not have to meet so much with ESS parents which he did not find productive. She said she would have spoken with Seymour about her concerns but now was turning to the MA board to bring it to their attention.

### Phase 2 update

Holmes, in his COO report, noted that the phase 2 survey results showed that the top two priorities are for more academic space and a competition-size gymnasium. Additionally, respondents would like an athletic field and a performing arts auditorium. A separate survey of fifth grade families drew 100 responses which were spread widely among staying at the west campus for sixth grade, moving to the east campus, and some still unsure. He said the temporary use of moduls could be considered to keep sixth grade at the east campus. He reported continuing to work on the five-year budget challenges as part of the financing investigation. During the public comment section, a parent thanked the board for seeking parent input and said that the east campus has the capacity to add 25 to 50 students at the high school level without moving sixth grade back to the west campus. She said that to increase the budget, MA needed to increase enrollment and would not be able to add more high schoolers until phase 2 is built. She said there is room to grow in grades K through 5 and asked the board not to block that growth by moving sixth grade back. She also noted that current sixth graders have access to advanced electives, enriching clubs, and sports as well as teachers who specialize in subject contact and who can offer structured support times. She said that MA's image would suffer by regressing and backsliding. She also said that adding sixth grade back to the west campus would put further strain on the car line,



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**Above:** Board member Misty McCuen spotlights Elizabeth “Beth” Weber for her work as elementary education technology coordinator at Monument Academy. Seen here with McCuen and her husband, Weber has been instrumental in facing the myriad technology challenges presented by COVID. *Photo by Jackie Burans.*

especially if the recirculation construction is not completed on schedule.

**School Spotlight**  
Board member Misty Mc-

Cuen spotlighted Elementary Education Technology Coordinator Elizabeth “Beth” Weber. McCuen said that she has heard many glowing comments about Weber who is said by her peers to be warm, open, and kind, offering help to all who approach her. McCuen said Weber had been vitally instrumental in facing the myriad technology challenges presented by COVID in addition to her normal duties. She has trained staff, conducted digital citizenship classes for students, helped create curriculum, and more.

From one of the nominating statements, McCuen read that she “helped so much last year when art and music went remote.” McCuen thanked Weber and encouraged the audience to read her biography on the school website to learn more about her.

**Highlights**

- Chief Financial Officer Marc Brocklehurst reported that the audit presentation had been moved to a later date when final documents will be available.
- Holmes reported that MA had collected over 5,000 pounds of food for the Harvest of Love event benefiting Tri-Lakes Cares.
- Board member Meghan St. Aubyn reported that the car line was going well at the west campus in the afternoon but there is “work to be done” on the morning car line. Graham asked that parents not make U-turns on Highway 105 after they exit the car line.
- The board unanimously approved changes to board policies 1500A, B

and C removing a specific number of board members and referring to the bylaws, as well as change the word “will” to “shall” in several places since “shall” is the legal language that indicates an obligation.

- St. Aubyn reported that staggered end times at the west campus meant that it lost some snow days. To meet state contact hour requirements, MA identified Feb. 25, Mar. 11, Apr. 8 and 22 as optional full days if there are excessive snow days. Assistant Principal Kurt Walker said they would only be used if required and the board confirmed this was for the west campus only.
- St. Aubyn reported that there has been a discussion of having an all-school fundraiser like a

booster club. The board unanimously voted to implement the Resource Development Committee already defined in the bylaws with St. Aubyn serving as the board chair.

\*\*\*\*\*

The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 9 at 6 p.m. at the east campus band room, in person only. The MA School Board usually meets at 6 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. For more information, see <https://bit.ly/ma-boe>.

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

*D-38 District Accountability Advisory Committee, Nov. 9*

# Update on Lewis-Palmer High School, Strategic Plan Priority 2: world-class education

*By Harriet Halbig*  
The November meeting of the District Accountability Advisory Committee (DAAC) was held at Lewis-Palmer High School on Nov. 9. Principal Bridget O’Connor, with the assistance of several students, conducted a tour of the facility prior to the meeting.

A theme of the school is EXCEL, which refers to engage, explore, communicate, empower, and launch.

Each day begins with positive statements to elevate each student.

The school also stresses character, leadership, academic achievement, school involvement, and service to the community.

To point out how the school uses the district’s strategic plan, the following were addressed:

- To cultivate a safe, healthy and welcoming school environment, staff and students have a sense of belonging and endeavor to build connections. Students and teachers discuss viewpoints.
- To ensure high quality instruction, teachers focus on helping students be ready for the future and try to eliminate “busy-work” in class. At the beginning of a class, the teacher will explain plans for the year and why each assignment contributes to the whole.
- To deepen professional learning, teachers are encouraged to set goals and collaborate on how to achieve them.

There is a school culture and climate survey for students and the staff maintains an inventory of all materials.

**Board update**  
Board of Education liaison Tiffiney Upchurch reported that at its last work session Chief Financial Officer Kitte

Overton explained the budget determining the use of ESSER III (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) funding. Among the priorities are an investment of \$500,000 in the geothermal system at Palmer Ridge High School, \$130,000 for food service to compensate for loss of revenue during last year, and other priorities. To view the entire budget, go to the district website [lewispalmer.org](http://lewispalmer.org), then click on family resources, DAAC, meeting content and the date of the meeting.

At the Nov.15 meeting, members of the board will take their oath of office.

A new board policy allows individuals to submit written comments which will be put in the public record.

Upchurch also announced changes in the board calendar due to the holidays. The regular meeting in December will be held on the 15th. The meeting in January will be on the 24th and the February meeting will be on the 22nd.

Governor Jared Polis has proposed reducing the amount of education money lawmakers set aside for other budget priorities in what is known as the “budget stabilization factor.” Polis would like to reduce the annual withholding to \$422 million which amounts to a \$150 million “buy down.”

**Strategic Plan Priority 2 – high quality instruction for all students**

Assistant Superintendent Amber Whetstine introduced Executive Director of Student Services Rick Frampton who explained that special education and gifted/talented instruction should fall in this category.

The Special Education Advisory Committee is a sub-committee of DAAC. The committee offers an opportunity for parent input, networking

opportunities, and advocacy on behalf of students with disabilities. Among its activities are an annual questionnaire

to parents and handing out the Alorium De award for individuals making a difference to a student with disabilities.

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Members are also encouraged to monitor legislative activity and write their legislators or attend hearings when they apply to students with disabilities.

The student count of those receiving special education services is on Dec. 1.

District Gifted/Talented Facilitator Annette Bass reported that there are currently 709 individuals evaluated as gifted in the district, or 10.69 percent of the student population. The department identifies gifted students beginning in third grade, although some are identified earlier. Each student has an Advanced Learning Plan which is reviewed annually. There is a gifted facilitator in each school.

The definition of gifted is determined by the state. Bass also pointed out that students who are identified as gifted do not only excel in academics but could excel in the arts or athletics. In some cases, students take advantage of opportunities outside the school setting.

Priority 2 initiatives

Some of the district initiatives in support of Priority 2 include high quality early education in preschool, strong core literacy programs, and secondary pathways offering students a variety of ways to move toward college or careers. These include traditional high school

curriculum, concurrent registration in high school and college, and Advanced Placement classes which offer college credit, among other initiatives.

Portrait of a D-38 graduate

The district is developing a portrait of a D-38 graduate, enumerating the characteristics which it wants to emphasize. A committee was divided into four groups which suggested ways in which students can become good communicators, problem solvers, community mentors and empowered individuals through district offerings.

Groups rotated between the lists to suggest programs in the district which would aid in developing these skills. For example, communicators would be developed through DECA, speech team, and other classes which require presentations. Problem solving is developed through group and team activities, community mentors are developed through partnerships with Kiwanis through their Key Club program, and empowered individuals benefit from participation in student government.

This segment of the meeting was moderated by the five student assistants.

The lists will be compiled and examined for further suggestions.

\*\*\*\*\*

The District Accountability Advisory Committee meets five times a year on the second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. Locations vary. The next meeting will be on Jan.11 at the east

campus of Monument Academy, 4303 Pinehurst Circle, Colorado Springs.

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

Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, Nov. 4 and 18

Proposed 2022 budget on track for approval

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

The Palmer Lake Board of Trustees (PLBOT) met twice in November, holding a special public meeting on Nov. 4 and a regular meeting on Nov 18.

The town’s proposed budget for 2022 was the focus of the board’s efforts at both meetings. The board continued to develop its policies for short term rental (STR) properties and for residential wells. The board also heard reports from Trustee Karen Stuth on the Master Plan Advisory Committee (MPAC) and the Palmer Lake Economic Development Group (PLEDG)

2022 budget “comprehensive and accurate”

At the Nov. 4. meeting Mayor Bill Bass opened the discussion of the proposed budget by applauding the work of

Town Administrator Dawn Collins and Deputy Town Clerk Julia Stambaugh, calling their draft budget “the most comprehensive and accurate budget the town has seen in some time.”

Collins gave the board an updated version of the draft budget first presented at the board’s Oct. 14 meeting. She pointed out some revenue numbers and medical plan rates were still coming in and added the budget would be a working document until the vote on its final approval scheduled for Dec. 9. She also drew the board’s attention to a contingency line-item containing \$200,000 for town hall upgrades and \$120,000 earmarked to fund a consultant to help develop the town’s master plan. Collins said the town hall work might be offset by funds from a grant.

Trustees Glant Havenar and Karen Stuth expressed concerns over the proposed funding for the master plan consultant. Havenar proposed having a team from the Land Use Department at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS) work on the master plan in place of the consultant who had applied for the job. Stuth and Havenar said the master plan was “not a governing document” and “has no force in effect,” making the proposed consultant’s fee excessive. Both trustees said they feared scope creep on the master plan project.

Bass said a master plan was a state requirement, and Trustee Darin Dawson recommended hiring a professional and accepting the costs of taking that approach.

The consensus of the board at the Nov. 4 meeting was to remain open to other options but to proceed with the master plan consultant already at work.

Collins said the staff was working to improve a problematic lease agreement for three vehicles.

At the Nov. 18 meeting, Collins provided an updated proposed budget that showed an increase in total revenue from \$2,837,954 to \$2,882,954 due to increases in court fines and use tax building materials. Collins said the fund reserve line-item still had \$200,000 for town hall upgrades and \$120,000 for the master plan consultant. She said \$30,000 needed to be found to address utility, maintenance, and pest control costs at the Elephant Rock property. She said staff recommended increasing that to \$50,000 for contingencies. Havenar commented that she expected the cost of the master plan consultant to be less than \$120,000 and the difference might cover the costs related to the Elephant Rock property. Havenar said an unbalanced budget could hurt the town’s eligibility for grants.

Collins and Dawson responded that the proposed budget was balanced and pointed out the 2022 budget reduced contingency funding from over \$700,000 in the 2021 budget to \$320,000.

Havenar said she was worried the town would lose staff if additional funding for salaries could not be found.

Collins asked if the board was comfortable increasing the contingency funding for the Elephant Rock property and Dawson answered that he was.

Following the board discussion,



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Bass opened a public hearing on the budget. There were no comments from residents and the hearing was closed.

The final vote to approve the proposed budget will be held at the regular board meeting on Dec. 9.

**STRs classifications defined**

At the Nov. 18 meeting Collins told the board that the STR policy the staff was developing was based on Leadville's example and defined two types of STRs: owner occupied and non-owner occupied. Collins asked for direction from the board on these aspects of the draft policy:

- STR properties must be licensed as such; a business license is not required. The STR licenses must be renewed annually.
- The number of non-owner occupied STR properties can't exceed 10 percent of the residential parcels within the town. There is no cap on owner occupied STR properties

Dawson and Havenar agreed with the proposed policy. Resident John Marshall, an STR owner, said he thought regulating STRs was an overreach. Bass said that regulating STRs was new to Palmer Lake, but other communities had been doing it for some time and the policy would help the town monitor what is going on.

**Residential well guidelines on hold**

Collins told the board the proposed policy concerning residential wells was still being worked on by staff and they were looking into the implications of the 100-year and 300-year standards. Residential well permits are issued by the state, she said, and GMS, Inc., the town's consulting engineers, were working with town staff to ensure the policy aligned with state regulations.

**First MPAC meeting held**

Stuth told the board that the MPAC was

working on an online questionnaire to be sent to the community based on the questions provided by the master plan consultant. It was difficult to develop a map of the community that would load on smartphones, she said. MPAC had recommended to the planning commission that they purchase software from Survey Monkey that would cost \$900 but could also be used by the police and fire departments. The survey presently had 17 questions, she said.

**PLEDG continues its work**

Stuth said the mission of the PLEDG was to create sales tax revenue for the town. PLEDG has four pillars: history, outdoors, dining and art. Ninety residents have volunteered, she said, adding the effort was generating buzz around town.

PLEDG is focusing on getting new businesses into empty spaces, Stuth said, and is looking for grant money to continue its work.

\*\*\*\*\*

The board of trustees is scheduled to hold one meeting this month, on Dec. 9, to accommodate holiday schedules, and will be held at the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce Community Meeting House at 300 Highway 105. See the town's website at [www.townofpalmerlake.com](http://www.townofpalmerlake.com) to confirm times, dates, and locations. While the town hall is being repaired, evening meetings will be held at the Palmer Lake Elementary School library at 115 Upper Glenway and daytime meetings will be held at the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce Community Meeting House at 300 Highway 105. Meeting times may change. Meetings are normally held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. Information: (719) 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).

*Donald Wescott Fire Protection District and Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, Nov. 10*

**Joint special meeting hears feasibility study presentation for potential unification**

*By Natalie Barszcz*

The board of directors of Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) and Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) held a joint special meeting at Lewis-Palmer Middle School on Nov. 10 to hear Emergency Services Consulting International (ESCI) Project Manager Dan Qualman present the findings of the joint feasibility study.

**Background:** ESCI conducted a joint feasibility study to explore the possibility of a merger between DWFPD and TLMFPD after both boards met on May 13 to discuss the possible approaches towards unification. Each board directed their respective fire chiefs to begin the independent study to find out if a merger could work. The study cost \$56,960 which was split between both districts. See [www.ocn.me/v21n7.htm#tlmfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v21n7.htm#tlmfpd) and [dwfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v21n7.htm#dwfpd).

The DWFPD board members attending were Chairman Mark Gunderman (via Zoom), Treasurer Duane Garrett, Secretary Larry Schwarz and Director Charles Fleece. Director Joyce Hartung was excused.

The TLMFPD board members attending were President John Hildebrandt, Vice-President Roger Lance, Treasurer Jason Buckingham, Secretary Mike Smaldino, and Directors Terri Hayes, Tom Kelly and Tom Tharnish. Buckingham and Smaldino attended via Zoom.

Qualman thanked the board members of both districts for putting their trust in ESCI to complete the in-depth study, and he presented some of the "high spots:"

- ESCI's scope of work looked at the current condition of each department to find the positives and negatives of unifying the two districts.
- The data was evaluated, and the findings and recommendations were provided to both districts.
- The study looked at the management components, response performance, staffing, deployments, service delivery, financial analysis, EMS, training, communications and fire prevention.
- The service demand for both departments revealed nothing unusual with calls increasing on the weekends after looking at three years of data for both districts.

- The study also looked at geographical demand, both urban and rural densities. The highest number of calls occur in the Monument area and along I-25.
- Insurance Services Office (ISO)

- ratings, used to evaluate insurance rates on a scale of 1-10, were also explored to determine all coverage and response times.
- The two districts have a combined 423 miles of road that will increase

- when Furrow Road is connected to Gleneagle Drive and when many other residential and commercial development are completed.
- The study noticed overtime was high for both departments and



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**Above:** Emergency Services Consulting International Project manager Dan Qualman presenting the findings and recommendations of the joint feasibility study on Nov. 10 at Lewis-Palmer Middle School. The joint special meeting between the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District and Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District board members was also attended by executive staff, firefighters and four members of the public. *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*

suggested adding two firefighters per shift for a total increase of six firefighters at DWFPD Station 1. Station 1 could become Station 4 if the merger moves forward.

- Fleece and Lance asked about extra staff to reduce overtime. Hildebrandt said, adding an additional 14 employees would cost about \$1.3 million per year and we can do without it right now. Qualman said the final report removed the increase of 14 personnel, but it is an option.

**Findings/recommendations**

Qualman said:

- The merger by inclusion would create combined financial sustainability for the future.
- An historical financial analysis of both districts was used to complete the study and a combined

five-year forecast of the finances discovered that TLMFPD revenue would continue to climb and DWFPD would experience a decrease by 2026.

- TLMFPD needs coverage in the southern part of its district and the unification would avoid the cost of spending an estimated \$6 million to build a fourth station, and about \$1.1 million per year to staff it.
- Over a five-year forecast period, the study predicts a cost avoidance of \$12 million could be achieved with a unification of the districts.
- Future station relocations or the elimination of stations should be based on response needs and performance standards. The board will need to set the response times.
- The continued monitoring of response times with improved data collection will determine future station locations.
- ESCI recommended a fire authority, not knowing how long it will take for the DWFPD subdistrict to be dissolved. *See [www.ocn.me/v21n6.htm#dwfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v21n6.htm#dwfpd) and [www.ocn.me/v21n7.htm#dwfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v21n7.htm#dwfpd).*

Hildebrandt said TLMFPD is not considering the unification with DWFPD a loss of revenue, and would not be subsidizing, but more of a contribution of about \$20 per \$500,000 home from the already assessed property taxes in TLMFPD. DWFPD residents could see an annual savings of about \$78 on a \$500,000 home should a vote to equalize the mill levy for the northern and sub-district take place, said Hildebrandt. *See [www.ocn.me/v21n10.htm#dwfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v21n10.htm#dwfpd) and [www.ocn.me/v21n10.htm#tlmfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v21n10.htm#tlmfpd).*

Former TLMFPD board president Charlie Pocock said, “he has asked many crews about the merger, and they are 100 percent behind it.” He continued, “I realize that everyone has to give a little to gain a lot, and the taxpayers will gain the most, and there is a lot of support for this merger, and a lot of people behind this.”

Qualman thanked Pocock for his input and said he heard positivity after talking to the crews from both districts and that is not always the case during mergers, but it is normal to be hesitant.

Interim Fire Chief Warren Jones said the next steps will be:

- Board discussions about a partial contract for services, for Wescott to partner with TLMFPD, and for Fire Chief Andy Kovacs and Division Chief of Operations Jonathan Bradley to manage DWFPD in 2022.
- Both district’s attorneys have suggested the boards continue discussing the path forward at the November board meetings, and separately in executive session to talk about a fire authority or a contract for services.

“This has been a tremendously wonderful project, and just about the coolest thing to experience in my fire service career, and as an outsider, we are on the cusp of making it happen and I applaud you all,” said Jones.

Kovacs thanked Qualman for his leadership in conducting the feasibility study and said, “The findings speak for themselves and really point to a unification of the two departments.” “It was a pleasure working with Jones, and he and the executive team are looking forward to the challenge of moving toward the end game of a merger-by-inclusion model that Qualman alluded to, and how best to move forward as one,” said Kovacs.

Both boards unanimously approved the agendas for the executive sessions to take place at the November board meetings. See the DWFPD article below and the TLMFPD article on page 14.

The meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.  
\*\*\*\*\*

For future joint special meeting information and joining instructions on the unification process visit [www.tlmfire.org](http://www.tlmfire.org) and [www.wescottfire.org](http://www.wescottfire.org).

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

**Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, Nov. 16**

# Unification diving deeper; 2022 Budget proposed

*By Natalie Barszcz*

At the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) meeting held on Nov. 16, the board discussed the findings of the Emergency Services Consulting International (ESCI) feasibility study for the proposed unification between the district and Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD), the proposed 2022 budget was revealed, and a firefighter took the oath of office.

The board noted Director Joyce Hartung was absent and they declined to make a motion to excuse.

**Unification update**

Interim Fire Chief Warren Jones welcomed TLMFPD Fire Chief Andy Kovacs and Division Chief of Operations Jonathan Bradley and said:

- After six months of both district boards working together on the unification process, there is hope that in the next few weeks the districts will come together on the operational and administrative side.
  - Kovacs has already begun chatting with the Wescott executive staff and firefighters.
- Jones also gave a quick review of the ESCI feasibility study presentation and said:
- The feasibility study showed un-

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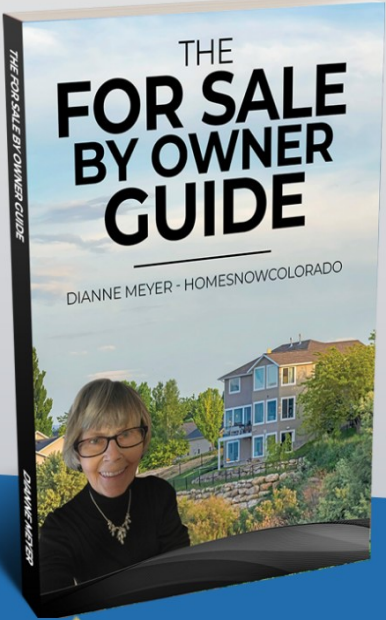
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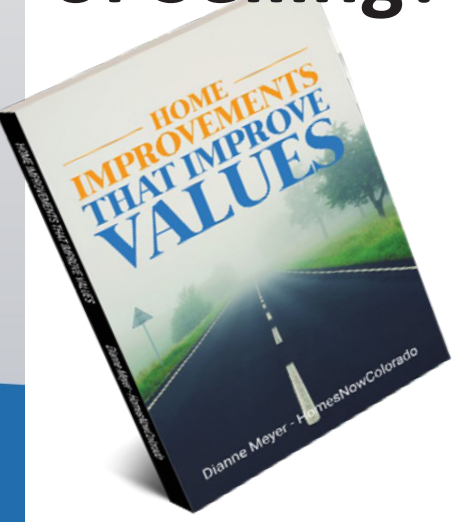
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equivocally, how the new organization will provide great service to the citizens and the internal staff with strong data, no questions asked.

- It shows all the response areas and how DWFPD Station 1 will fit into the new organization.
- The unification will provide financial stability into the future, and that alone shows the study was worth the money.
- The study provides a good road map of how to combine the districts operationally and use the station areas.
- The possibility of fire service ambulance coverage in the Wescott area as early as the first or second quarter of 2022, will be an increased service for residents. American Medical Response currently operates an ambulance at Station 1.
- A third ambulance would allow the new organization to capture ambulance revenue that is currently going into the private sector.
- Station 2 (located on the northeast corner of Stagecoach Road and Highway 83) is not always in service due to a lack of staff. The unification would rectify the staffing issues, and next spring could be much different.
- The study also made a recommendation to increase the data collection capability in both organizations and add an administration position and increase the line staff by six personnel.
- The new combined organization will be able to meet many more of the international standards for performance, becoming a five-station department with 20 people on duty. TLMFPD is currently a three-station department and has not reached accreditation yet, but Kovacs has plans for the process in 2022.

Financially, the Donald Wescott end-of-year balance is declining annually and although able to provide services in the future by ourselves, some changes would be needed, and fully staffing two stations will be really difficult, said Jones.

Jones also said:

- Both district's attorneys have drafted a contract for services to begin in 2022 and the merger would be completed at a later date once the mill levies have been addressed.
- The bridge to the merger is a Fire Authority, however another option could be a partial contract for service where all employees would become TLMFPD employees.
- We are almost there, and we do not know which direction each board wants to go, but after both boards have met in

executive session, within 48 hours the path forward will be clearer. (See the joint special meeting article on page 11).

Chairman Mark Gunderman said ESCI did a good job presenting the study and we are getting to the point of finding the next logical step, and hopefully trying to make it happen, but the board questions will be kept for the district attorney in executive session.

Gunderman asked Kovacs if he was aware of the accreditation issue before he arrived and was it something important that he wanted to do for TLMFPD?

Kovacs said the following:

- The philosophy of accreditation is two-fold, both organizationally and personal. It's for professional growth, and as an advocate of lifelong learning and a huge advocate for providing employees the opportunity to reach higher education goals.
- With any organization I am fortunate enough to lead, the accreditation process constantly makes you reflect on how you are doing business and we can always strive to do better.
- TLMFPD is investing \$237,000 in software to begin data mining all the information to meet the national standards at the beginning of 2022.
- The process is a heavy lift, and requires an incredible amount of time and energy, but there is value in it, and it is a "badge of honor" for any department to achieve accreditation.
- The first step has already been made, with the five-year strategic plan that the TLMFPD board approved. That document is available on the district website at [www.tlmfire.org](http://www.tlmfire.org).
- The process will be reviewed and adjusted as needed when the organization moves from a three-station department to a five-station department.
- A combined administration workforce with an accreditation manager in the new organization will create the remaining two foundational documents: Standards of Coverage and Community Risk Assessment. The documents are the next steps toward achieving the accreditation process.

Gunderman thanked Kovacs for his explanation.

**Note:** The board may hold a special meeting to discuss the unification, in addition to the regular meeting in early Dec., for updates see [www.wescott-fire.org](http://www.wescott-fire.org).

**2022 budget proposed**

Jones said the district has to build a budget as a fully independent agency regardless of the unification process. The projected property tax revenues for 2022 is a little over

\$3.3 million, with a 13 percent increase in assessed value for the 2022 budget year, and he said:

- Specific ownership taxes are projected conservatively due to the lack of vehicle availability at dealerships.
- The district is not anticipating any grant revenue, but maybe another round of COVID-19 reimbursements.
- The total revenue increase for 2022 will be about \$128,236 or about a 4 percent overall increase.
- The district has revenue over expenditure of about \$119,000 and \$50,000 of that is dedicated to the starting fund balance to begin re-building the reserves, as previously directed by the board.

The budget is still carrying a fire chief salary, but an amendment can be made should the partial contract for service go ahead in January, and if the merger does not happen, one or two budget amendments will be needed to make the budget work in 2022, said Jones.

Jones suggested the following:

- A 4 percent salary increase across the board that matches TLMFPD and that will continue to implement the 20-step plan pay system.
- An increase in the communications budget for the purchase of Mobile Data Communications (MDCs), a mounted lap

top computer. Currently, DWFPD relies solely on radio contact when responding, but TLMFPD does have MDCs. During a recent mutual aid call a TLMFPD responding Battalion Chief had to relay sensitive information to the Wescott crew engine via cell phone.

- A move to Microsoft Office 365, the same information technology system as TLMFPD, would be beneficial instead of using a number of different applications.

**Pay scale adoption**

Jones said the following:

- In the past the pay plan has just been referenced in the budget, but district counsel Emily Powell of Ireland Stapleton Pryor Pascoe PC law firm, has advised that the board does not have to adopt a pay plan annually if the budget allows for the pay increase.
- TLMFPD has a five-step pay plan which is more common and most organizations have not used the 20-step plan since the 90s.
- It is important for a governing body to control the number of personnel positions and if you do not have that the fire chief can do things you might not like.

Jones suggested the board adopt the number of staff positions and the pay scale in the pay plan.

Gunderman said the

board should adopt the pay plan and continue on the assumption that we are operating as a separate entity.

The proposed 2022 budget will be available for public review on the district website and the public hearing will be held virtually at the next board meeting. See [www.wescottfire.org](http://www.wescottfire.org).

**2021 budget status**

Jones said the district continues to watch the ending fund balance after discovering in July during the budget review that reserve funding has been spent down over the past couple of years. The district should be seeing a \$1.3 million ending fund balance to roll over into the 2022 budget year, but it will be in the high \$900,000 range, said Jones.

Jones also said a budget amendment in Jan. 2022 for about \$20,000 to \$30,000 will be needed to cover funding for issues that have accumulated over the past several years. The amendment is not nearly as much as previously thought (about \$150,000) due to the district receiving additional wildland deployment reimbursements. See [www.ocn.me/v21n11.htm#dwfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v21n11.htm#dwfpd) and [www.ocn.me/v21n9.htm#dwfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v21n9.htm#dwfpd).

**October financial update**

Administrative Assistant Stacey Popovich read the financials as of Oct. 31 and said the following:

- The Community Bank of Colorado Fund has a balance of \$227,579.
- The Wells Fargo Public Trust Fund has a balance



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of \$992,267.

- The district has a total of about \$1,219,846 million.
- Round four of the COVID-19 state grant fund opened and the district has submitted a requested for a \$12,000 reimbursement.

The board accepted the October financial report as presented, 4-0.

#### Chief's report

Jones said the following:

- Battalion Chief Scott Ridings submitted the October monthly activity report and it was unremarkable with only a small vegetation

fire on Highway 83.

- The district received a note of thanks for Station 2, "B Shift" for a district response in 2020.
- Driver Engineer Shaun Leonhardt will ensure the Station 1 roof repair is completed when the ordered materials arrive.

#### Firefighter hired

Jones introduced Firefighter/EMT Maverick Keigher, and said he was formally a volunteer for a few years with DWFPD and will now become a paid firefighter at Station 2, having completed the interview process, background,

medical and psychological checks. Gunderman administered the oath of office in a limited ceremony and congratulated Keigher.

#### Executive session - unification

The board moved into executive session at 5:01 p.m., with legal counsel pursuant to CRS 24-6-402(4)(b) and (e) to discuss matters subject to negotiation and receive advice from legal counsel related to the unification with Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District.

**Note:** Popovich notified OCN that when the board moved back into regular session, no motions or decisions were made and the board adjourned at 6:34 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Correction

The caption for the four photographs which accompanied the article on Donald Wescott Fire Protection Dis-

trict in the November edition listed the individuals in the wrong order. The correct order, from left to right is Driver Operator Justin Myers and Firefighter/EMTs Seung Ju Han, Matthew Griggs, and David Bowker. OCN sincerely apologizes for the error in identifying these individuals.

\*\*\*\*\*

Meetings are usually held on the third Tuesday of the month at station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Dr., at 7 p.m. Due to COVID-19 distancing protocols, meetings are held virtually for public attendees. The next regular board meeting scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 2 at 4 p.m. For updates, virtual meeting joining instructions, agendas, and archived minutes, visit [www.wescottfire.org](http://www.wescottfire.org) or call the Administrative Assistant Stacey Popovich at 719-488-8680.

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

## Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, Nov. 17 2022 Budget approved early; surprise promotion

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) meeting on Nov. 17 the board approved and adopted the 2022 budget and multiple resolutions and schedules. The board also heard about a recent promotion, received an update on the unification process, and held an executive session with legal counsel to discuss the unification with Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD).

President John Hildebrandt attended via Zoom.

Treasurer Jason Buckingham was excused and then joined the meeting at 7:17 p.m., via Zoom.

#### 2022 proposed budget – staffing addition

Fire Chief Andy Kovacs requested the board adopt and approve the proposed 2022 budget one month earlier than usual. He also recommended adding another firefighter position in addition to the proposed two, for a total of three due to a retirement and vacancies created by recent internal promotions.

Division Chief of Operations Jonathan Bradley said:

- Over the past couple of years and particularly in 2021 the district is experiencing how vacancies effect the staff and the additional burden created by overtime.
- Staffing shortfalls also limit education and training and the additions will eliminate a staffing crisis and allow for fire academies, an upcoming military commitment, training and wildland deployments.
- The district will be down seven personnel next year and it is critical to start hiring staff now because the process is lengthy and includes fire academy training.
- Any new hires would not join a shift until June 2022 after fire academy training.

Hildebrandt said a reduction in overtime would come later in 2022.

Secretary Mike Smaldino asked about the additional cost and if the budget could sustain the additional staff.

Kovacs said, it would cost about \$100,000 to the 2022 budget and that includes the salary and benefit increases.

Lance asked if the position was open because DWFPD has some well-



**Above:** From left, Lt. Micah Coyle receiving the "Firefighter of the Year" award, from Fire Chief Andy Kovacs on Nov. 2, at the first annual Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District awards banquet. Kovacs administered the oath of office in a surprise ceremony promoting Coyle to Battalion Chief during the event, and Christina Coyle pinned on her husband's "badge of office." Multiple awards were also presented to many firefighters and EMS staff during the banquet. The event was held at Hearth House in downtown Monument. *Photo by Christian Leigh Photography.*

trained volunteers, and would they have the opportunity to apply for one of those positions.

Bradley said the district has specific eligibility for hiring and two conditional offers have been made with another two eligible applicants should those initial offers not be accepted.

Kovacs said, there were some significant one-time expenses in 2022 and in the future funding will be available to hire more staff.

#### Public hearing and adoption of the 2022 budget

Vice-President Roger Lance opened the public hearing for the TLMFPD 2022 budget and hearing no comments on the adoption of the budget the public hearing was closed.

The board adopted and approved the 2022 budget 6-0 by roll call vote. See [www.ocn.me/n21v11.htm#tlmfpd](http://www.ocn.me/n21v11.htm#tlmfpd).

Hildebrandt requested the board adopt and approve the following:

- Resolution 2021- 01, 2022 Final Budget summarizing the expenditures and revenues for each fund, and adopting a budget for 2022.

TLMFPD (Cont. on 16)



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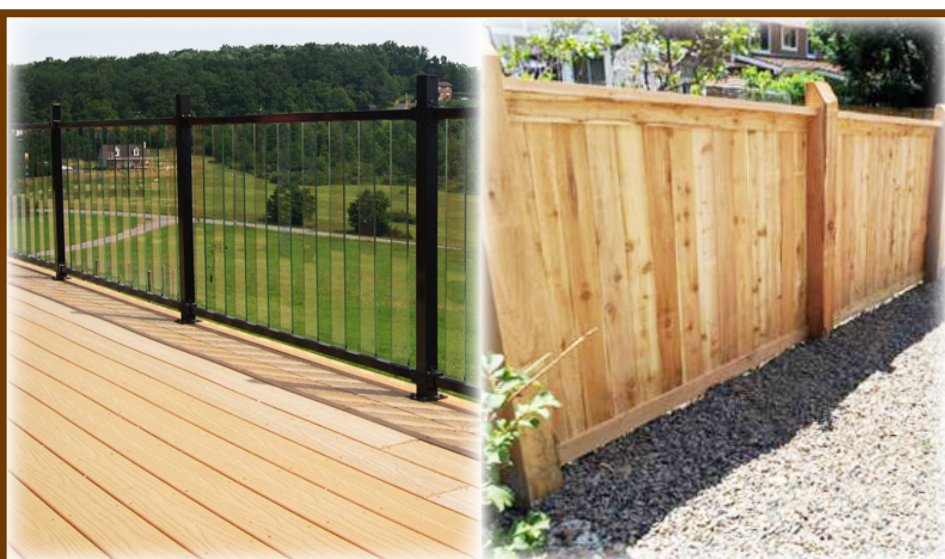
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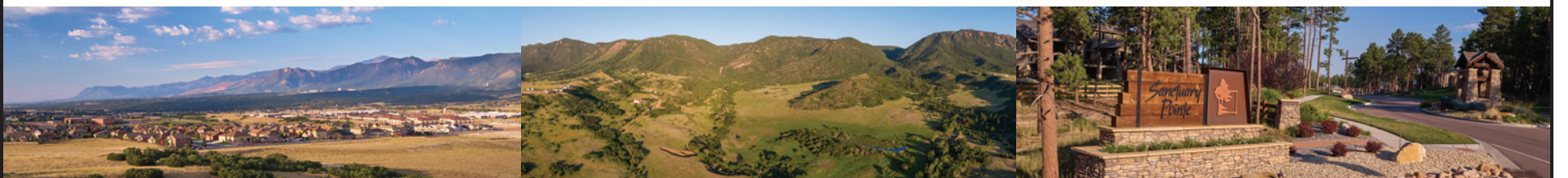


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- TLMFPD (Cont. from 14)**
- Resolution 2021- 02, 2022 Budget Appropriations to approve and appropriate sums of money to the various funds for the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District 2022 budget year.
  - Resolution 2021- 03, 2022 Property Tax Levy to approve the levying of property taxes at 18.4 mills for the year 2022, to help defray the costs of government for the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District 2022 budget year.

The board approved 6-0 and adopted all three resolutions by roll call vote.

The board also adopted and approved the following schedules for 2022: the wage schedule, the fee schedule and the board of directors meeting schedule.

The board adopted and approved the schedules 6-0. See [www.tlmfire.org/board](http://www.tlmfire.org/board).

**Staff promotion**

Kovacs congratulated Lt. Micah Coyle on his recent promotion to Battalion Chief on Nov. 2 at the first annual awards banquet and for receiving the “Firefighter of the Year” award.

**Wescott Unification update**

Kovacs said the board would go into executive session with Maureen Juran of Widner Juran LLP to discuss the unification. The Emergency Services Consulting International (ESCI) feasibility study corroborates what we all have known, with a third-party unbiased assessment of both districts, said Kovacs. See joint special meeting article on page 11 and DWFPD article on page 12.

Kovacs also said, the unification of the districts would accomplish the fol-

- lowing:
- A cost avoidance of up to \$12 million (for a station, nine personnel and an engine) for the district by delaying the building of a fourth station in the southwest corner of the district.
  - The DWFPD Station 1 in Gleneagle would serve the southern portion of the district extremely well with reduced response times for EMS and fire calls.
  - A combined effective firefighting force will rely less on the mutual aid response of neighboring districts.
  - The unification with Wescott would bring two water tenders to the district avoiding additional purchases. With those added resources Insurance Services Office ratings will increase and that will help with accreditation of the district. Water tenders typically cost about \$350,000 each.
  - Both districts are lacking in data capture and analysis and the proposed 2022 budget includes a request for \$237,000 in software upgrades to begin the accreditation process of the district in 2022.

“There is a lot of enthusiasm for the unification and there is great benefit to the firefighters and the communities,” and “the feasibility study highlights and confirms that both districts will be in a better place when the unification happens,” said Kovacs.

Smaldino asked about the potential sale of Wescott’s Station 3.

DWFPD Interim Fire Chief Warren Jones said the piece of property that Station 3 is built on, is a legal lot that can be sold and the district has the

documentation.

The feasibility study recommended the Wescott Station 3 not be staffed in the future, said Kovacs.

- Financial report**
- Hildebrandt read the financial report as of Oct. 31 and said the following:
- The district is about 83.3 percent of the budget year to date.
  - The property tax revenue received is about \$9.210 million year to date.
  - Specific ownership tax revenue is 16 percent ahead of the expected revenue at \$894,133.
  - Ambulance fees are below at 82 percent at \$667,614.
  - Impact fees are 150 percent ahead of expected revenue at \$188,273.

The district overall is 98.7 percent of expected revenue for the year with \$11,290,172 million. The projected 2021 income budget was set at \$11,439,647 million.

Overall expenses year to date are \$7,495,118 million, and about 82.27 percent of the projected 2021 total expense budget set at \$9,110,920 million. In September, 16 electronic payments above \$2,500 were reviewed and of note were:

- Three payments to the Firefighter & Police Pension Association (FPPA) for a total of \$135,758.11 (includes three pay periods).
- Station 1 remodel - Mark Young Construction for \$166,908.
- Annual Physicals \$12,203.
- A Stryker Power load stretcher \$22,391.
- Three treadmills \$13,083.
- Kaiser Permanente insurance \$71,129 per month.

The board accepted the financial report for October as presented, 6-0.

- Chief’s report**
- Kovacs said the following:
- The district’s spare ambulance has been evaluated by Cimarron Hills Fire Department and they will make the purchase in early 2022.
  - Division Chief of Community Risk/Fire Marshal Jamey Bumgarner and staff held 22 fire prevention programs and had the captive audience of about 1000 students in D-38, making a considerable impression on students during fire prevention month.
  - The transmission was replaced at 6,000 miles outside the warranty on the new Ford ambulance and the dealership honored the warranty, but other costs were high for other vehicle repairs.
  - The 2231 Ladder truck is undergoing major service and will be out of service into early 2022. The Wescott ladder truck is available if needed.
  - The Station 1 remodel has been completed, and the contractors are working through a list of repairs. The most significant correction is the replacement of the kitchen cabinets due to the depth

- being too shallow to hold plates.
- Crews are expected to move out of the trailers before the cold weather begins.
  - The ladder truck replacement committee is choosing the specifications well in advance to avoid a 5-10 percent increase that would be incurred if the choices are not completed by the beginning of 2022.

Bumgarner said there is enthusiasm and excitement for the new ladder truck and the department is getting ahead early, but there is no cost to the district to place the order ahead of time. The engine will not be built until later and delivered about March-May 2023, said Bumgarner.

Hildebrandt said the plan is to put the 2231 Ladder truck into reserve status in the future.

- Kovacs said:
- Firefighter Steve Peters will be promoted to Lieutenant at a ceremony in December.
  - Firefighter Keith Barker will move into an acting Lieutenant role for several months next year.

Both candidates did extremely well during the process, said Kovacs.

**Station 1**

**Training Center Update**

Bradley said the plan for the Station 1 training center is outlined in the budget. Some training props will be identified for purchase for the property that can be used in the interim and in place for the finished training facility. Training will take place on the site next year, but the earthwork and site preparation is ultimately years down the line and for the 2023 budget.

Bradley said the site plan will take some significant resources and a decision on what the training center will be needs to be discussed. Water issues and some drainage will begin the process in 2022, but the concrete will be expensive, and it could be installed in phases.

Smaldino said, don’t go cheap, let’s spend money and do it right and avoid tearing anything out in the future.

**Executive session**

The board moved into executive session at 7:32 p.m., pursuant to CRS 24-6-402(4)(e) to determine positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations; developing strategy for negotiations; and instructing negotiators with regard to the unification.

Kovacs informed OCN that no actions were taken post executive session.

The meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday of the month. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Friday, Dec. 3 at 6:30 p.m. at TLMFPD Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. For Zoom meeting instructions, agendas, minutes, and updates, visit [www.tlmfire.org](http://www.tlmfire.org) 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. 17

Public hearing on the 2022 budget

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD) meeting on Nov. 17 the board held a public hearing on the proposed 2022 budget, transferred legal counsel representation information, and received multiple updates to include the Station 2 remodel and repair projects.

Director David Hoffpaur was excused.

**2022 budget –public hearing**

Chairman Rick Nearhoof opened the public hearing on the proposed 2022 budget for public comment. The public was only permitted to attend the meeting via Zoom technology, due to the

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recent station closures to visitors in response to the rising cases of COVID-19 in El Paso County. See [www.bffire.org](http://www.bffire.org).

Fire Chief PJ Langmaid said the proposed 2022 budget will have an estimated beginning balance of \$1.249 million based on the actual income the district is expected to receive through the end of 2021. He answered several questions. See [www.ocn.me/v21n11.htm#bffrpd](http://www.ocn.me/v21n11.htm#bffrpd).

- Treasurer Jack Hinton said:
- The beginning balance for the 2022 budget year, should be about \$750,000 for the General Operating Fund, not \$1.249 million, but maybe he was “way-off base,” and he would not mind the balance being \$800,000.
  - The transfers are shown in the proposed 2022 budget and will be about a \$42,000 increase to the Tabor fund, \$564,939 to the Capital Improvement Fund and \$35,000 to the Emergency Fund reserves.

Langmaid said the only change made to the proposed 2022 budget since October is the board-approved increase to the fire chief’s salary, and he said:

- The district received significantly higher than predicted Special Ownership Taxes (SOT) in 2021, and the budget is estimating higher SOT for 2022, and that could be the reason for the discrepancy in the starting balance column.
- The deployment budget is estimated to be \$376,104 for 2022, but the district cannot predict the exact amount.

Hinton asked the chief to update the board by the end of the month with the beginning balance for 2022 and the expenditures.

Langmaid said, everything in the proposed 2022 budget is linked, and the formulas show the expenditures to be correct. The re-scheduling of the Dec. 8 board meeting will cause the finalization of the budget to be tight, said Langmaid.

Hearing no further public comment, Nearhoof closed the public hearing.

**Note:** Langmaid contacted OCN, to confirm the beginning balance fund for the 2022 budget would be about \$1.3 million and noted that it is determined by adding the reserve funds and the unreserved funds together. The 2022 budget is scheduled to be approved and adopted by the board at the Dec. 8 meeting.

Financial report

- Treasurer Jack Hinton said the following:
- Without the reserves the district has \$1.83 million in the bank as of Oct. 31.
  - The district needs \$750,000 to get the district through the first quarter of 2022 to ensure enough funding for everything and the additional new hires.
  - Whatever is left after subtracting the operating cost for the first quarter of 2022 will be transferred in two separate amounts to the Capital Improvements Fund and the reserve funds.
  - The district has spent 59 percent of the budget, however \$300,000 will be paid down for the 2022 Pierce engine, and that will dramatically lower the payments on the remaining balance of \$332,000. See [www.ocn.me/v21n5.htm#bffrpd](http://www.ocn.me/v21n5.htm#bffrpd).
  - The district received \$19,000 in property taxes and \$20,000 for deployments in October.
  - The service contracts for the mobile radios and pagers have been paid for the year and the district is up to date in terms of what is needed for mobile radios.

The board accepted the financial report as presented, 4-0.

Chief’s report

- Chief PJ Langmaid said the following:
- Eight new recruits began training with the department on Nov. 1 and will be fully assigned to shifts in December.
  - The new-hire medical exams are expensive and some of the results are contradictory. The district is evaluating the cost for future hires.
  - The older engines continue to have mechanical issues on a regular basis and the oldest Rosenbauer will go to reserve status when the new Pierce Pump Enforcer engine is received in 2022.
  - The 2007, 701 small pickup is back in service after its transmission was replaced.
  - The district mechanic is assessing the fleet for the 2022 apparatus replacement plan.
  - Deputy Chief James Rebitski attended the Colorado Fire Chiefs Conference and primarily focused on the Fire Marshal aspects.
  - Capt. Chris Piepenburg also attended the Colorado Fire Chiefs Conference, attending a two-

- day Incident Safety Officer program and an additional three days of classes.
- Rebitski and Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn attended a two-day EMS financial and billing program in Colorado Springs.
  - The district is discussing water systems capabilities with Cherokee Metropolitan Water District to better understand the true firefighting capabilities as systems in Sterling Ranch and around Park Forest are brought online.

Station 2 repair project

Rebitski said the bids for the water damage repairs at Station 2 have been received and quotes have been compiled from three contractors. The repairs will be as follows:

- Phase 1 – Schanel Construction will add Redi-rock blocks (décor rock wall), and dirt to divert water west from the station out to the field, and the front of the station will be relandscaped for \$8,887.50.
- Phase 2 – Windsor Concrete will install a 30-foot-by-6-inch trench drain vehicle rated C class prefabricated drain chase at the east end of the parking lot. This modification will allow water to be diverted from the parking lot and gutter to the south hillside. Riprap will break up the water coming out of the drain. Five sections of broken and cracked sidewalk will be replaced. A galvanized steel sidewalk chase to drain to the inlet of the culvert system will prevent erosion of the hillside for \$18,610.00.
- Phase 3 – CMG Corporation will install a Corian lip to each shower to prevent water leakage and will be shaped to prevent trip hazards and remain ADA compliant with seats and grab bars.
- A QPR Asphalt Patch will be inserted into the pavement crack to repair it for \$96.00.
- The estimated total repair project cost is about \$27,893.50. The board previously approved up to \$49,000 for the repairs. See [www.ocn.me/v21n9.htm#bffrpd](http://www.ocn.me/v21n9.htm#bffrpd) and [www.ocn.me/v21n10.htm#bffrpd](http://www.ocn.me/v21n10.htm#bffrpd).

Hinton commented that not all of the building is ADA compliant.

Vice Chair Nate Dowden said the public does not need access to the whole building.

Langmaid said that many new stations are not ADA compliant, and he is less concerned about ADA compliance at the smaller repair level, and more so for the overall Station 2 remodel when any ADA compliance will increase the cost.

Station 2 remodel project

Ribitski said there have been many building code changes over the past ten years and the timing of the fire station building seminar he recently attended in Kansas City was perfect, and he said:

- Nine letters for the remodel bids were sent out to architect firms on Oct. 15.
- Five architects responded and four have completed a walk-through tour of Station 2, and they all agreed the station is too small to accommodate the increase in personnel.
- The primary focus of the architects is building fire stations and public service facilities, and all were recommended by other fire agencies.
- All the information will be compiled for the board to review prior to the next meeting.

Nearhoof requested the board set a date for a work session to discuss the Station 2 re-model.

Langmaid recommended the board revisit the possibility of a work session at the December meeting and that will allow Rebitski to gather more information.

Transfer of legal counsel details

Langmaid said that Linda Glesne received a promotion to partner, and the law firm decided to split due to the many specialized areas of about 20 lawyers. Board Secretary Donna Arkowski said the familiar names that the district has worked with on previous matters will be retained in the new firm, and it was an amicable decision to split the law firm.

Nearhoof requested the board approve the transfer of the legal counsel representation from Collins Cockrel & Cole, PC to Cockrel Ela Glesne Greher & Ruhland, PC.

The board approved engaging the new law firm, 4-0.

Property inclusion

- Langmaid said the following:
- Many property owners north of Hodgen Road do not pay for fire service and others that do are “shopping around” to potentially change to another fire district for service, preferably BFFRPD.

- A point of inquiry from residents has been the district policy language regarding exclusion fees that other districts do not have, and it is a cause of concern for property owners.
- The board may want to consider a change to the policy at the Dec. meeting to assist in recruiting parcels into the district, while maintaining the original intentions of avoiding massive legal costs associated with thousands of exclusions simultaneously.

**Background:** Resolution 2021-02 was adopted at the January 20, 2021 board meeting, and included revised procedures. See [www.ocn.me/v21n2.htm#bffrpd](http://www.ocn.me/v21n2.htm#bffrpd) and [www.bffire.org](http://www.bffire.org) for more information.

2022 board member election

Langmaid said the board will need to adopt a resolution in December to nominate an election official to ensure a fair election occurs.

- Arkowski said the following:
- The district received a letter from Micki Mills of Cockrel Ela Glesne & Ruhland, PC, referencing the 2022 board election preparation.
  - The district will have three board positions in the May 2022 election and a date will be set at the December board meeting.
  - It would be better if the county could run the election concurrently with their elections in April or November but Special District elections

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are run separately except when a tax increase change is requested.

- Dunn will have to run the election and it's not fun.

The meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

Meetings are usually held on the third Wednesday every month at Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. Meetings are open to the pub-

lic via Zoom until further notice. The next regular meeting is scheduled one week earlier on Dec. 8 at 7 p.m. For joining instructions, updates, agendas, and minutes, visit [www.bffire.org](http://www.bffire.org) or

contact Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn at [admin@bffire.org](mailto:admin@bffire.org) or call 719-495-4300.

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

## Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, Nov. 15

# Rates likely to rise in 2022

*By James Howald*

At its November meeting, the Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) board heard an analysis of water and sewer rates from the district's financial consultants and debated how to set them for the next five years. A public hearing on the proposed 2022 budget was held and the board heard operational reports.

### Rate study proposes increase for water and sewer

District Manager Jessie Shaffer introduced Andrew Rheem, of Raftelis Financial Consultants, the company WWSD uses to study water and sewer rates. Rheem explained the purpose of a rate study is to make sure the district's prices will recover the cost of service and to guarantee the costs of each service are paid by the customers. Rate studies help with long-term financial plans and ensure that capital projects can be done, and debt service is managed, with the least financial impact on consumers, Rheem said, adding that inflation and population growth are factors in the rate models.

Rheem said an average of 220 new accounts per year in the WWSD service area were projected between 2023 and 2026, and an average of 100 new ac-

counts per year were expected between 2027 through 2031. Rheem said this was a conservative estimate of growth.

Rheem explained residential water rates have two fixed charges that increase by meter size: the Renewable Water Infrastructure Fee (RWIF) and a standard base charge. In addition to the fixed charges, residential customers are also billed for monthly water usage using a three-tier rate structure, with a cost per 1,000 gallons assigned to each tier:

- Tier 1 covers up to 6,000 gallons per month, with each 1,000 gallons currently costing \$6.14.
- Tier 2 covers between 6,001 to 25,000 gallons per month, with each 1,000 gallons currently costing \$10.12.
- Tier 3 covers all usage above 25,001 gallons per month, with each 1,000 gallons currently costing \$16.19.

Irrigation, non-potable, and bulk customers are billed using different rates, he said.

According to Rheem, sewer rates are simpler, with residential accounts paying a base charge of \$32.31 and non-residential customers paying a base charge and additional charges

based on volume.

Rheem recommended a 2 percent annual increase in residential sewer rates for 2022 through 2026, which would raise the sewer rate from \$32.31 in 2021 to \$35.80 in 2026. For residential water rates, he proposed a 5 percent total increase in 2022 and 2023, and a 4 percent total increase in 2024 through 2026. The base charge for most residences would increase from \$9.69 in 2021 to \$12.01 in 2026. Those changes would lead to usage costs in 2026 as follows:

- Tier 1 would increase to \$7.56 per 1,000 gallons
- Tier 2 would increase to \$12.47 per 1,000 gallons
- Tier 3 would increase to \$19.95 per 1,000 gallons

Rheem also discussed raising tap fees for new customers between 2 percent and 5 percent.

The rate study examined how reducing the RWIF would impact debt service on the district's outstanding bonds. For most residences, the RWIF is \$40 per month, and leaving it unchanged would generate revenue slightly greater than what is required to service the district's debt. Cutting it to \$39 would reduce revenue, but still generate enough to service outstanding debt. Rheem asked the board for direction on this issue.

Rheem pointed out that water consumption over the last 18 months was not typical due to impacts of COVID-19, such as schools transitioning to remote learning, so the study used consumption data gathered before the pandemic.

Following Rheem's presentation, the board discussed different approaches. Board President Brian Bush expressed concern that the proposed rates might not generate enough revenue to fund all the necessary capital improvement projects that have been identified and mentioned that the district has been drawing down reserves recently. He suggested a 5 percent increase across the board, with the exception of the sewer base charge, which should increase by 2 percent. The board came to a consensus on raising tap fees 5 percent in 2022, raising

sewer fees 2 percent a year until 2026, raising total water rates 5 percent a year until 2026, and leaving the RWIF unchanged at \$40 a month for most residences. The district will begin a new long-range planning process in 2022, Shaffer said, and that effort may influence further adjustments to rates.

The board will hold a public hearing on the proposed rates at their regular meeting on Dec. 20. They will vote on the rates following that hearing.

**Hearing on 2022 budget opened** Bush opened a public hearing on the proposed 2022 budget.

Shaffer reviewed recent changes to the budget, noting that the revenue projections will change in light of the rate discussion just held. Shaffer said only minor changes had been made to the budget since its last review.

There were no comments from residents on the proposed budget. The board will vote on it at their next meeting.

### Highlights of operational reports

- Operations at Woodmoor Ranch have shut down for the winter.
- The Loop water re-use project held a meeting recently and moved forward with funding paperwork required by El Paso County for the project to receive money from the American Recovery Plan Act. Other districts may join the project.
- Operation Superintendent Dan LaFontaine said the unbilled water statistic was very high in October due to two large main breaks. There was a delay in the reporting of one of the breaks because the resident who first noticed it reported it to El Paso County rather than WWSD.

\*\*\*\*\*

The next meeting is scheduled for Dec. 20 at 1:00 p.m. Meetings are usually held on the second Monday of each month at 1 p.m., but the December meeting was rescheduled. Meetings are held at the district office at 1845 Woodmoor Drive; please see [www.woodmoorwater.com](http://www.woodmoorwater.com) or call (719)-488-2525 to verify meeting times and locations.

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

## Monument Sanitation District, Nov. 17

# Rates unchanged in 2022

*By Jackie Burhans and James Howald*

The Monument Sanitation Department (MSD) met once in November. The board considered a resolution to set rates and fees for 2022 and held a public hearing and a vote on the 2022 budget. The board updated the process and the fee charged for the use of its conference room and heard an update on the request for proposal (RFP) to provide legal services to the district. Finally, the board heard operational reports.

Board Chairman Dan Hamilton and Director Katie Saucedo were excused. Treasurer John Howe ran the meeting in Hamilton's absence.

### Rates stable for next year

District Manager Mark Parker told the board that the district's rate study showed the current rates and fees covered the cost of providing service and

the district was "good to go." Parker recommended that rates remain unchanged and said that they would be re-examined next year.

The board voted unanimously to approve Resolution 11172021-1, which leaves rates and fees unchanged.

The district's rates can be found on their web page: <https://monumentsd.colorado.gov/schedule-of-fees>.

### Public hearing on budget held

Parker opened the public hearing on the proposed 2022 budget.

Director Laura Kronick said she noticed a difference between the draft of the budget emailed to her after the last board meeting and posted for public review and the draft of the budget on which the board was preparing to vote.

*MSD (Cont. on 20)*

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MSD (Cont. from 18)

Parker said the draft before the board was the same one emailed previously and posted.

No comments were made by district customers and Howe closed the budget hearing.

The board voted unanimously to approve Resolution 11172021-2 which adopts the budget for 2022 and appropriates the necessary funds.

Conference room agreement and fee considered

Parker gave the board a draft of the conference room rental agreement he proposed to use beginning in January of 2022. The proposed agreement states that MSD will have priority if a schedule conflict exists and that use of the room will be limited to government, educational, community, business, and non-profit organizations. The renter will be responsible for set-up and clean-up of the room. The proposed fee is \$30 for a five-hour block of time.

Parker asked for comments on the proposed agreement and fee so that the issue could be addressed at the next board meeting.

**Update on RFP for legal services**

Parker told the board that three law firms—Fritsche Law, Sparks Willson, and Collins Cockrel and Cole—had responded to MSD’s RFP for legal services. Parker said he would follow up with companies to whom the RFP had been sent.

Operational reports

In his Manager’s Report, Parker said wastewater service line inspections were under way in Wagons West and would begin soon in Willow Springs. A memorandum of understanding between MSD and the home builder at Willow Springs specifying the requirements for the development to connect to MSD’s service lines was signed by all parties. Parker said two board seats—those belonging to Howe and Saucedo—would need to be filled in an election in May 2022. The board members elected would serve three-

year terms due to the new election cycle. MSD has received 25 tap fees from builders at Willow Springs.

Parker mentioned Triview Metropolitan District (TMD) had proposed annexing the Monument Ice Rink into its service area. He said, this would present legal difficulties because TMD’s water would be flowing into MSD’s sewer lines. If they annex the ice rink, MSD would require TMD to also provide sewer service to the rink, Parker said.

\*\*\*\*\*

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. 15 at 9 a.m. See <https://colorado.gov/msd>. For a district service map, see <https://colorado.gov/pacific/msd/district-map-0>. Information: 719-481-4886.

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

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

Triview Metropolitan District, Nov. 17 and 18

Potential regional water system becomes more tangible

By Jennifer Kaylor

The Triview Metropolitan District conducted back-to-back events in November. The district held a second open house on Nov. 17 to communicate the status on and receive input about the proposed regional drinking water pipeline called the Northern Delivery System (NDS). Triview’s board of directors convened on Nov. 18 for its regular monthly meeting. One agenda item was to review and consider a petition to include Higby Road into the district.

Triview staff, all board directors, and legal representatives attended the meeting either online or in person.

The November board meeting packet, including the agenda, may be accessed via <https://triviewmetro.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Triview-Board-Packet-for-11.18.2021.pdf>.

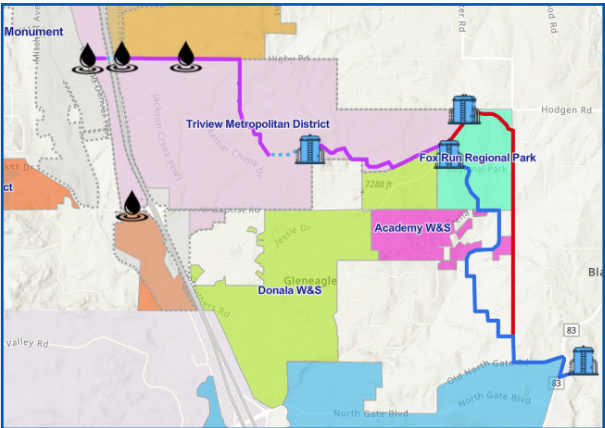
Triview is a Title 32 special district in Monument that provides road, park, and open space maintenance, as well as water, stormwater, and wastewater services to Jackson Creek, Promontory Pointe, Sanctuary Pointe, and several commercial areas.

Northern Delivery System explained, public input sought

At the open house located at Bear Creek Elementary School, District Manager Jim McGrady presented information and graphics to explain the proposed water delivery system intended to provide renewable water to northern El Paso County water systems. A significant reason for creating the NDS is to bring renewable water to the area and reduce reliance on groundwater that regional providers pump from the Denver Basin aquifer. Groundwater is a nonrenewable water source in which replenishment from rainfall and snowmelt does not keep pace with pumping demands and water quality is prone to arsenic and radium contamination among other elements. In addition to improving water quantity and quality, the pipeline would use some of Colorado Springs Utilities’ (CSU) existing infrastructure thereby capitalizing on cost effectiveness and efficiency, install fire protection along the pipe route including areas within Fox Run Regional Park, and provide a system to transport treated wastewater return flows if the North Monument Creek Interceptor is built.

McGrady presented two potential routes currently being considered, both of which start at a proposed pump station that would be constructed next to an existing CSU storage tank near the juncture of Old North Gate Road and Highway 83. The placement of a one-million-gallon water tank depends on the route. Route consideration A (shown in blue in the map below, courtesy of the Triview Metropolitan District) passes through Fox Run Regional Park and places the tank—for which strategic design and location are planned to mitigate visual impacts—in the

park southeast of Baptist Road. Route consideration B (shown in red) passes through a more northerly section of Fox Run Park and places the water tank near an existing Donala Water and Sanitation District (DWSD) tank. Due to elevation, consideration A is more energy efficient, creates fewer road and wooded park impacts, and adds fire hydrants to the park but would require construction of a pump station for DWSD. Consideration B would consolidate the new tank with an existing DWSD tank, omit the need for an additional DWSD pump station, and use existing trails for pipeline construction. The route would place fire hydrants along Roller Coaster Road, however, instead of inside the park and electrical needs would be greater, consequently increasing expenses for NDS participants and ultimately customers.



McGrady’s full presentation is published on Triview’s website at [https://triviewmetro.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Powerpoint-Nov-17\\_-\\_story-map\\_3-web.pdf](https://triviewmetro.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Powerpoint-Nov-17_-_story-map_3-web.pdf) and an expanded explanation is available at <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/eed101379c3d482d93f1881ee5378bc8>. See also [https://triviewmetro.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Fox-Run-Regional-Park-Alignment\\_NDS.pdf](https://triviewmetro.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Fox-Run-Regional-Park-Alignment_NDS.pdf) for a focused depiction of a potential Fox Run Regional Park alignment.

The NDS project team is comprised of sponsors Triview and Forest Lakes Metropolitan District, civil engineering firm JDS-Hydro Consultants, Inc., and urban design and land planning corporation N.E.S. Inc. Other water providers in northern El Paso County have the option to participate in the pipeline as well. The team has been working closely with El Paso County personnel to establish permits, approvals, and agreements which consider among other issues endangered species such as Preble’s meadow jumping mouse habitat, wetlands, archeological sites, and Fox Run Regional Park’s culturally modified trees and recreational use. El Paso County will ultimately make final decisions on the project. The current cost estimate of the project is \$21.5 million. Construction is anticipated to begin during the second quarter of 2022 and end around the third quarter of 2024.

McGrady, other team members, and county representatives responded to questions, comments, and suggestions throughout the presentation and afterward. The public is encouraged to learn about the NDS project from the aforementioned resources posted on Triview’s website and provide feedback to Triview or other team entities.

**District accepts Higby Road maintenance and repair responsibilities**

Directors reviewed and considered a petition from

the Town of Monument to Triview for the district to include Higby Road into its service boundary for the purpose of constructing and maintaining improvements on the road. Citing consistency with the terms and conditions of the intergovernmental agreement of September 22, 1987, between the Town and the district, the petition stated, “all roadways constructed, improved, and maintained on Higby Road by the District will be dedicated to the Town for public use, and the District will remain responsible for the ongoing maintenance and repair of the roadway improvements on Higby Road.” The petition further stated that “the Town and District are working cooperatively to ensure that funding for necessary improvements to said roadway is provided by those parties benefitting from such improvements.”

McGrady characterized the Town’s petition as a culmination of three years’ worth of planning and work. He described hundreds, if not thousands, of pages of right-of-way information resulting from a thorough survey of the road which extends from its connection with Jackson Creek Parkway—just east of I-25—to the eastern edge of Homeplace Ranch. Three preliminary steps needed to be accomplished before the petition reached the Triview directors’ November meeting. The El Paso County Board of County Commissioners needed to petition the Town to annex Higby Road as its public right-of-way, the Town had to approve the annexation, and then the Town needed to petition Triview to include Higby Road into the district. The directors unanimously approved the inclusion of Higby Road into the district.

With Higby Road now under Triview’s purview, McGrady stated that design for improvements would start right away. Additional legal steps remain, however, so snow removal responsibilities would likely be “handed off” from the county in the summer of 2022.

Trustee challenges October decision

During public comment, Town of Monument Trustee Mitch LaKind appeared before the board to register a formal complaint about the district’s October board decision to explore potential inclusion of Monument Ice Rinks for the purpose of providing water service. He disputed Triview’s pursuit of such an inclusion agreement without communication and collaboration with the town.

McGrady clarified that Monument Ice Rinks initiated the proposed idea and that the Triview board simply chose to accept the invitation to assist the ice rink owners in examining all water service options. He further explained that the Woodmen Valley Chapel Monument campus, which is currently under construction and in relative proximity to Monument Ice Rinks, is now tied into Triview’s infrastructure, so the request from Monument Ice Rinks Facility Manager Jeremy Hunter was a logical one. McGrady acknowledged that Monument Ice Rinks falls within the town’s service area and the district would work with the town if the inclusion idea moved beyond the current phase of an exploratory conversation.

Additional actions and reports noted

- Directors approved two resolutions. Resolution 2021-12 pertaining to Triview’s annual administrative framework and how it will manage its business throughout 2022. It will maintain its current board meeting schedule of 5:30 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month at the district’s business office. The second resolution, 2021-13,





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initiated steps for the district to prepare for a regular election of directors on May 3, 2022.

- Water Superintendent Shawn Sexton reported that Triview’s fourth quarter radium testing result was 3.2 picocuries per liter (pCi/L), well below the maximum of 5 pCi/L. Sexton noted that the recent result lowered the district’s average to 3.9 pCi/L.

Although Triview board meetings are generally held on the third Thursday of the month, the next meeting is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 14, and will conduct hearings on and approvals of the 2022 budgets (including subdistricts A and B), rates, and fees and certification of the mill levy. The district office is located at 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302.

Check the district’s website, <https://triviewmetro.com/>, or call (719) 488-6868 for meeting updates. See also “Triview Metropolitan District” on Facebook or [Twitter.com/@TriviewMetro](https://twitter.com/TriviewMetro).  
*Jennifer Kaylor can be contacted at [jenniferkaylor@ocn.me](mailto:jenniferkaylor@ocn.me).*

Donala Water and Sanitation District, Nov. 18

Personnel and customer policies updated

*By James Howald and Jackie Burhans*  
On Nov. 18, the Donala Water and Sanitation District (DWSD) board amended personnel and customer payment policies. They extended the district’s short-term water service contract with Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU). The board also heard a report from General Manager Jeff Hodge and other operational reports.

**Updated policy addresses on-call compensation, paid time off**  
Office Manager Tanja Smith presented Resolution 2021-6, which, for the first time, compensates district staff when they are on-call after hours even if they are not called to report for work. Under the previous policy they were compensated only if they received a call from the district. Smith said on-call staff deserved compensation since they needed to be available for work and were required to plan accordingly. If an on-call employee is called, they will also be paid for the time they work to complete the task, Smith said. The policy also simplifies time off by providing paid time off (PTO) that can be used for vacation, sick leave, or personal time. New employees will have two weeks of PTO and after ten years they will have four weeks. The policy caps the amount of unused PTO that will carry over to the next year, Smith said. The amended policy also added Juneteenth as a holiday.  
The board voted unanimously to approve the new policy.

**Customer payment policies updated**  
Resolution 2021-7 changes the user fee due date from the 20th of each month to the 24th. Hodge said electronic billing allowed the district to give customers more time to pay the fee. Resolution 2021-8 makes credit card fees payable by the district not by the customer. Hodge said this change would help the district reach the goal of having 60 percent of payments made electronically, which will cut the district’s staffing costs. Smith said the change would encourage customers to use the auto-pay feature of their credit cards.

The board voted unanimously to approve both resolutions.  
**Contract with CSU extended**  
On Jan.1. 2019, DWSD contracted to purchase 1,000 acre-feet of treated water annually from CSU. The initial contract provided water for 2019 and 2020 and allowed for two one-year renewals. The contract was renewed to cover 2021, and on Nov. 18 the board considered renewing the contract for a fourth and final year, which would provide DWSD customers water through Dec. 31. 2022.  
Hodge asked the board to renew the contract, adding that he would open negotiations with CSU for a long-term contract. Hodge said he wanted to start the re-negotiation as quickly as possible.  
Board President Ed Houle said a vote was not needed and he signed the agreement to renew the contract for its final period.

**Manager’s report discusses radium, Holbein plant, water re-use**  
In his report, Hodge told the board samples of filter media and water are being tested for radium and staff is awaiting results. Houle asked about the response to the district’s second letter on the subject sent to customers and Smith said fewer calls were being received and customers seemed more receptive to the district’s approach to lowering radium levels.  
Hodge said staff is working with vendors on upgrades to the Holbein water treatment plant, which is currently out of service. Tanks are having maintenance work done, and upgrades are being made to automatically pull more data into the operations management software.  
Hodge reviewed two proposed water re-use projects, the first led by CSU, and the second by Tri-Lakes area water districts, including DWSD, Woodmoor Water and Sanitation and the Town of Monument. Hodge said DWSD’s work on the CSU-led re-use project was complete. About the second project Hodge said the members were working with El Paso County to get funding for the effort and he had discussed

with legal counsel how to draft an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) between the participating water districts. An IGA would help the water districts work together with less apprehension about losing power, and would give them more credibility with the county, Hodge said.  
**Highlights of operational reports**

- The district’s financial report showed revenue is on track with expectations and laboratory costs are a bit higher due to expanded radium testing.
- DWSD has just over \$11 million in cash reserves.
- DWSD produced just over 22 million gallons of water in October, 16.3 million gallons from aquifers and 5.7 million gallons of surface water from the Willow Springs Ranch.
- Wells 2A and 2D are out of production; the district has a quote from Hydro Resources to do the work needed to bring them back online.
- Planning for a new well is under way with Leonard Rice Engineering, Inc. (LRE)
- LRE engineer Brett Gracely told the board that funds from the federal American Rescue Plan Act would soon become available for water projects.
- Water meters needed for DWSD’s meter replacement project have shipped.

The next meeting is scheduled for Dec. 13 at 1:30 p.m. Generally, board meetings are held the third Thursday of the month and include online access 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 [www.donala-water.org](http://www.donala-water.org) for more information about the district.  
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El Paso County Planning Commission, Nov. 2 and 18

WMMI variance of use recommended for approval

*By Helen Walklett*  
The El Paso County Planning Commission met twice during November, voting to recommend for approval a variance of use for the Western Museum of Mining & Industry (WMMI) and a replat request for a Black Forest property.  
**Commission recommends approval of WMMI variance of use request**  
The planning commission voted unanimously at its Nov. 2 meeting to recommend for approval a variance of use request by the WMMI. The variance would allow the museum to continue to hold events such as

outdoor concerts and agricultural entertainment activities without being in breach of its RR-5 zoning. Such activities are an important source of revenue for the museum.  
The application was heard at the El Paso County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) meeting on Nov. 16. (See BOCC article)  
**Mountain Shadow Ranch subdivision**  
At its Nov. 18 meeting the planning commission recommended for approval a request by Dale and Stephanie McGehee for a vacation and replat of lot 3 in the Mountain Shadow Ranch subdivision to create

two single-family residential lots. The 10.5-acre property is zoned RR-5 (residential rural) and is located about a quarter mile north of the Hodgen Road and Thompson Road intersection to the west of Black Forest Road.  
It was approved as a request item, meaning there was no discussion, and is now scheduled to be heard at the BOCC land use meeting on Dec. 7.  
*Helen Walklett can be reached at [helenwalklett@ocn.me](mailto:helenwalklett@ocn.me).*

El Paso Board of County Commissioners, Nov. 2, 9, and 16

More road funds allocated in proposed 2022 budget; WMMI variance of use approved

*By Helen Walklett*  
During November, the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) gave final direction on the proposed 2022 county budget, allocating more funds to roads. The commissioners also approved a variance of use for the Western Museum of Mining & Industry (WMMI). That decision was made at the Nov. 16 land use meeting, the first time that the BOCC had followed its new schedule of holding a land use meeting in the afternoon, separate from the regular morning BOCC meeting.  
**2022 proposed budget**  
At the regular BOCC Nov. 16 meeting, the commis-

sioners gave their final direction on the 2022 budget, which totals about \$512 million. They agreed to allocate a further \$3 million for high-priority road improvements, increasing road funding by \$14 million compared to 2021. Thirteen million dollars of this is one-off funding; the remaining \$1 million is ongoing for road maintenance. In addition, \$100,000 was added as ongoing funding for fire mitigation in county parks and \$75,000 as ongoing for deferred park maintenance.  
The funding to do this came largely from the reallocation of funds assigned to the Business Revolving Loan Fund and the Housing Authority Corpus. The

Business Revolving Loan Fund’s proposed funding of \$1.5 million has been eliminated and funding for

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the housing program reduced by \$1 million to \$2 million. Commissioner Longinos Gonzalez Jr. was eager to make it clear that the county was not eliminating or reducing funding to programs that it had already run but rather these are new additions to the proposed budget and that \$2 million was still being provided that had not been previously allocated. The sheriff's office had also signalled that it no longer needed \$400,000 for critical needs. A part of this sum went to meet an increase in the county's contract with the Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region, leaving \$275,000 to be allocated elsewhere.

The budget is now scheduled to be adopted at the Dec. 7 BOCC meeting.

WMMI variance of use

At the Nov. 16 BOCC land use meeting, the commissioners unanimously approved a request for a variance of use by the WMMI. The variance allows the North Gate Boulevard property to continue to hold a range of events outside of its core museum functions which are an important source of revenue to the museum, and which previously were held in violation of its RR-5 (rural residential) zoning. The events include outdoor concerts, seasonal festivals, and a farmers' market.

County staff was made aware in 2019 that events were being held at the property that were unrelated to museum activities and not allowed uses under its RR-5 zoning after traffic issues arose with one such event. At the time, Grant Dewey, executive director of the WMMI, told staff he believed the museum had an exemption to hold events and that it had been doing so for over a decade.

As a variance of use application was not filed in 2019 to resolve the matter and the events continued after a notice violation, Craig Dossey, executive director of planning and community development, made an executive determination authorizing litigation against the museum in June 2020. In August 2020, the museum appealed the executive director's decision

to the BOCC which denied the appeal but agreed to stay litigation to allow the museum to pursue a recently filed variance of use application. At the Dec. 1, 2020, BOCC meeting the commissioners voted again to stay litigation to allow the museum further time to advance the variance of use application. Several temporary use permits were issued to allow the museum to continue to host events while completing the application. See [https://www.ocn.me/v20n9.htm?zoom\\_highlight=%22grant+dewey%22](https://www.ocn.me/v20n9.htm?zoom_highlight=%22grant+dewey%22) and [https://www.ocn.me/v21n1.htm?zoom\\_highlight=%22western+museum+of+mining%22](https://www.ocn.me/v21n1.htm?zoom_highlight=%22western+museum+of+mining%22)

At the Nov. 16 meeting, Dewey stressed the importance of revenue raised from the events held at the property. He said, "To give you a little more detail about some of those revenue streams, where they come from, you can see that the more traditional museum type activities and tours are a fairly small percentage as compared to our potential for rental revenue and our gift shop and our community events so the overall package makes us much more sustainable to have multiple revenues and also really allows us to reach 100% of financial sustainability so we're excited to have the potential to do that."

Dewey said the museum would lose 20 to 30 percent of its revenue if the variance were not allowed. The applicant's letter of intent stated that it would not be able to continue to operate without that revenue.

The application came to the BOCC from the planning commission with a recommendation for approval. At that meeting, Dewey had asked if the need for a site development plan could be waived. Nina Ruiz, planning manager, Planning and Community Development, told the BOCC it could not do that, but it could choose to waive the site development plan fee of \$2,837. No decision was taken on that.

The vote to approve the variance of use was unanimous. Commissioner Stan VanderWerf said, "Congratulations to the mining museum and we look forward to the continued great work that takes place with you there."

Tri-Lakes Cares/Crossfire Ministries  
Community Investment grant update

At the Nov. 9 meeting, Tri-Lakes Cares and Crossfire Ministries updated the commissioners on work the two nonprofits had collaborated on with the grant money they received from the BOCC under the Community Investment Program. Haley Chapin, executive director, Tri-Lakes Cares, said that the collaboration had helped ensure that those across the county who were struggling, particularly through the pandemic, were served. John Green, director of development, Tri-Lakes Cares, said 840 individuals had been supported multiple times via food distribution, maintained housing, utilities assistance, transportation help, or medical assistance in 2020-21. Renee Beebe, executive director, Crossfire Ministries, said her organization had been able to help 15,630 individuals. Each non-profit received \$12,500 in grant funding. The partners are applying again for funding from this program and this time they are asking for funding of \$25,000 each.

Other decisions

- Nov. 2 – the commissioners voted to approve the preliminary release of a bond for \$2,687,135 for the Forest Lakes Filing No. 5 following the completion and inspection of public improvements at the subdivision.
- Nov. 9 – approved the preliminary release of a check for \$31,249 following the completion and inspection of all subdivision improvements at the Settlers Ranch 2B Filing development. The commissioners also approved the acceptance of certain streets at the Forest Lakes Filing No.5 and the Jackson Ranch Filing No.4 subdivisions into the county road maintenance system.
- Nov. 16 – voted to appoint Christopher Whitney to the planning commission as an associate member. His term runs for one year.

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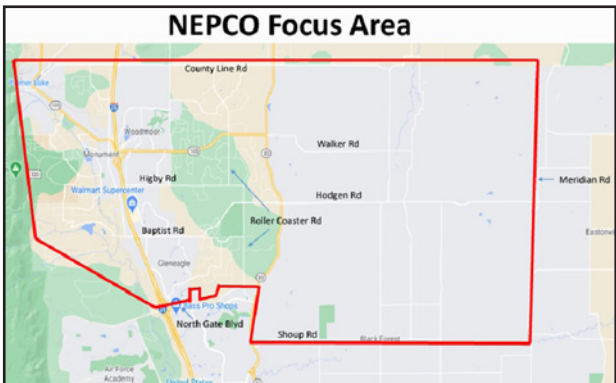
Northern El Paso County Homeowners Associations (NEPCO), Nov. 13th

NEPCO holds board elections, hosts county commissioners

By Marlene Brown

The Northern El Paso County Homeowners Association (NEPCO) General Membership bi-monthly meetings for September and November were held at the Woodmoor Barn located at the Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) on Woodmoor Dr. The in-person meetings have been suspended at Monument Town Hall due to COVID-19 and will continue to be held at the Woodmoor Barn for the foreseeable future.

NEPCO has been around 20 years with the original intent to bring about communication among its members. More than 50 Homeowner Associations (HOAs) in Northern El Paso County (see map of Focus Area) serve as point of contact facilitating information regarding state, county, and local government issues in planned land use management in the Focus Area.



Board elections held

Board elections were held, as a quorum was present, with more than 25 HOAs represented at the meeting. Greg Lynd's term as president has expired and he will not seek re-election. Secretary Bob Swedenburg and Member-at-Large Tim Miller's terms have also expired. They will be nominated for re-election. Two open slots on the board need to be filled. That means four of the seven positions on the board are up for election. Nominees include Swedenburg, Gleneagle North HOA; Tim Miller, Tall Pines Ranch HOA; Dave Betzler, Red Rock Ranch HOA; and Gerry Shaw, Ridge at Fox Run HOA. Swedenburg asked for nominees from the floor and there weren't any. He then asked for a show of hands for the four nominees and the vote was unanimous. Beginning Dec. 1, 2021, the newly elected members, Swedenburg, Miller, Betzler and Shaw, will serve for two-year terms. Positions

will be determined at the December NEPCO board meeting.

Improved notification of HOAs sought

John Lewis, chairman of the Transportation and Land Use Committee, reports that with over 75 land development requests in the NEPCO Focus Area in the last two years, he has been working on a new operating model to engage and notify impacted HOAs. Lewis has been collecting Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data and center-point addresses for each HOA. He is working to assist the HOAs with coordination of responses to the county regarding new developments.

Ember Ignition presentation

Matthew Nelson, chairman of the Wildfire Preparedness Committee, gave an *Ember Ignition* presentation. As a reminder, Nelson stated, "Majority of homes lost in a wildfire event are lost due to ember ignition." He continued to explain that structure hardening can prevent ember ignition. He recommended you keep flammable materials away from your home or under your deck. Remove needles and leaves from your roof and create a five-foot fuel-free zone around your house, including removing wooden fences and gates attached to the house, he said. You can contact Matthew Nelson at the Woodmoor Improvement Association for more information.

County commissioners speak to NEPCO

El Paso County Commissioners Holly Williams and

Stan VanderWerf spoke next about county budget and expenditures including, but not limited to, infrastructure, the court system and jail, and public safety and health. Infrastructure projects being done in the NEPCO Focus Area include Monument Hill American Disabilities Act work, the I-25 Gap Project, Highway 105, and Beacon Lite Rd. These are just a few of the projects paid for and overseen by the county. There is a backlog of over 1,100 miles of lanes in the county that will not get maintained or repaired this budget fiscal year. Increased cost of materials, supply chain bottlenecks, and unfunded mandates from the state level will slow down progress. For more information contact Holly Williams at [hollywilliams@elpasoco.com](mailto:hollywilliams@elpasoco.com) or StanVanderWerf at [stanvanderwerf@elpasoco.com](mailto:stanvanderwerf@elpasoco.com).

The meeting ran overtime and there were many more questions for the commissioners. It was requested that they come back soon to discuss the issues that concern their constituents. Both Williams and VanderWerf are known to respond to emails and are open to discuss county issues.

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The next NEPCO meeting is scheduled for January 22, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. at the Woodmoor Barn. For information regarding NEPCO go to [nepco.org](http://nepco.org).

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

Woodmoor Improvement Association, Nov. 17

Board raises dues, fines, and fees

By Jackie Burhans

The Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) met on Nov.17 to vote on a budget that increases the annual dues, approve a new fine schedule, and increase Barn rental fees.

Annual dues to increase

Board President Brian Bush reported that the board has been working on the 2022 budget for WIA and it is in parity between income and expenses. The budget includes an increase in the annual dues from \$267 to \$275 per year, or just under the maximum of 3 percent. The board unanimously approved the budget which can be seen online at <https://woodmoor.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/2022-Approved-Bud->

get.pdf.

Fine schedule updated

Vice President Peter Bille brought a finalized fine schedule to the board that more clearly and consistently specifies the violations around fireworks, pyrotechnics, and open fires. Fines start at \$5,000 and can increase up to any amount at the board's discretion due to threat to life and property. If warranted, serious cases may be forwarded to the El Paso County Fire Marshal for prosecution.

The board unanimously approved the new schedule. It's posted on the website at <https://woodmoor.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/11.17.21-Approve-Fine-Schedule.pdf>



Barn rental fee increased

Bille said that WIA is starting to get more rentals at The Barn and noticed that the fees were well below market rates. The rental fee will increase from \$50 to \$75 per hour for non-residents of Woodmoor and from \$20 to \$25 per hour for residents. Residents are entitled to four free hours every six months for personal functions. For more information on The Barn community center, see <https://woodmoor.org/community-center/>.

Board highlights

- Bush reiterated that residents should return their trash cans to storage as soon as possible after trash has been picked up. Woodmoor Pub-

lic Safety (WPS) will place a sticker on the cans of residents who leave them out, and after three violations will refer the violator to covenant control.

- Cagliaro said that annual dues notices will go out between the 15th and 22nd of December; please contact WIA with any mailing address changes.
- WPS Chief Kevin Nielsen reported that talks are continuing with El Paso County about possibly re-installing the flashing lights by Lewis-Palmer Middle School (LPMS). He encouraged LPMS parents to be patient and use designated drop off points to avoid creating traffic issues.

- Bush said that the four main violations are trailers, off-driveway parking, tall grass, and garbage cans.

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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 has been moved to Dec. 15 due to the holiday.

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

The record dry and warm weather continued for a second consecutive month in the region as a persistent ridge of high pressure over the southwestern United States continued to assert control on our weather pattern. Air flows in a clockwise direction around high pressure in the northern hemisphere. This means that as storm systems move through the eastern Pacific Ocean and into the United States and Canada, they are forced to move north into British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, and northern California, then around the top of the ridge through southern Canada and into the upper Midwest. This leaves Colorado in a dry and mild northwesterly flow, where storm systems are consistently moving just to our west and north.

This has been the pattern all of October and November and is typical during a La Nina fall (cooler than normal temperatures in the equatorial regions of the Pacific Ocean), which is what we are experiencing (<https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov>). Heavy rain and snow piled up in October and November in the Pacific Northwest while we were left high and dry. This pattern will eventually break down, especially once the La Nina pattern weakens and shifts along the equatorial region of the Pacific Ocean. But this likely won't happen until well into winter and toward spring. This means I would expect a mild and dry winter interrupted by a few snowfalls and cold snaps, but nothing consistent and likely a well below normal snow season overall. These patterns are nothing new as we often oscillate between warm and dry and wet and cold. This is called natural climate variability. Unfortunately, most of us have a short memory and limited context on these types of things, so it's hard to remember everything we are seeing has happened before and will happen again.

For example, if you were in the area during the 1880's you would have experienced a decade of be-

low normal snowfall, with the winter of 1888-1889 still holding the record as the lowest seasonal snow total for Denver. Not too far behind that was just a few years ago when 2016-2017 produced only slightly more snowfall for the season. Of course, there were a lot of things different in the world in 1889 vs 2017, but the natural climate variability was still occurring regardless of our activities. The one thing we can be certain of here on the Palmer Divide is a wide variety of weather conditions on just about every timescale. This is because we are at a high elevation, in the middle of a continent, far away from moderating influences of large water bodies and exposed to cold air from the north and warm air from the south.

Regardless of how this winter season goes, hopefully we can make up for some of the moisture deficits, especially mountain snowfall, as we head into spring. Let's hope for some March 2003, April 2007, or May 2019-type snowstorms just when we need the moisture the most.

For the month overall, temperatures were well above normal, with sunny skies the predominant feature. Precipitation was well below normal. However, November is one of our driest months of the year, so low precipitation is expected and not a big deal for us. The bigger issue is the lack of snow in the mountains, as we should normally be building up that important snowpack right now, both for ski season and for spring and summer snowmelt and water supplies.

During the entire month there were only three periods of active weather in the region. The first two days of the months saw lots of fog and low clouds along with some drizzle and flurries, but this only amounted to about a trace of precipitation. Then a quick moving system provided a glancing blow during the afternoon and evening of the 20th, with a trace to a half-inch of snow accumulating around the region. A slightly stronger storm moved through on the 24th, but this storm was again moisture starved. Most

of us picked up 1-2 inches of snowfall, although areas along the foot of the Front Range like Palmer Lake did a little better with 3-5 inches of snow. This enhancement was due to the easterly flow producing extra lift and squeezing out all available moisture as the air was forced to rise along the elevated terrain.

A Look Ahead

The month of December can be cold around the region with daytime highs often staying below freezing and overnight lows that can drop well below zero. But, as noted previously, we can experience a wide variety of weather with westerly winds producing mild conditions. 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, with most areas having some snow on the ground and if we are lucky snowfall on Christmas Eve or Christmas day.

November 2021 Weather Statistics

Average High	56.1° (+6.7°)
100-year return frequency value max	55.5° min 38.5°
Average Low	25.8° (+4.4°)
100-year return frequency value max	27.5° min 14.1°
Monthly Precipitation	0.14" (-0.55")
100-year return frequency value max	3.80" min 0.16"
Monthly Snowfall	1.7" (-9.1")
Highest Temperature	74° on the 3rd
Lowest Temperature	8° on the 18th
Season to Date Snow	3.2" (-18.6")

(the snow season is from Oct 1 to Sept 30)

Season to Date Precip. 1.03" (-1.39")

(the precip season is from Oct 1 to Sept 30)

Heating Degree Days 787 (-79)

Cooling Degree Days 0 (0)

Bill Kappel is a meteorologist and Tri-Lakes resident. He can be reached at [billkappel@ocn.me](mailto:billkappel@ocn.me).

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.

Proposed water tank in Fox Run Regional Park

The Triview Metropolitan District is seeking to build a water pipeline to bring renewable surface water to their District so that they can reduce the amount of non-renewable water that they take from our limited

aquifers. This is definitely a laudable goal.

In order to make this project work, the District must build a water tank in our community to store the water. There are two possible locations for that water tank. One location is next to the Donala Water and Sanitation District water tank that is north of Baptist Road and just east of Sanctuary Pointe. The other location is south of Baptist Road, plopped down in Fox Run Regional Park. The water tank will be 98' wide and 15' high and will be surrounded by an approximately 500' long fence that is approximately 7' high and likely topped with barbed wire. There will also be an access road built from Baptist Road to the water

tank. The proposal for the Park calls for the tank to be located on what is currently a heavily used trail.

It seems to me that the obvious logical choice is to put the new water tank adjacent to the already existing water tank and not to put it in the middle of our Park where it would diminish the beauty that we all love. If you agree, then please contact the El Paso County Parks Department at [Parks@elpasoco.com](mailto:Parks@elpasoco.com) or (719) 520-7529 and Jim McGrady, the General Manager for the District, at [jmcgrady@triviewmetro.com](mailto:jmcgrady@triviewmetro.com) or (719) 488-6868. They are seeking our opinions on their project.

Steve Waldmann

Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

'Tis the Season for Great Books

By the staff at Covered Treasures  
"Reading is essential for those who seek to rise above the ordinary." — Jim Rohn

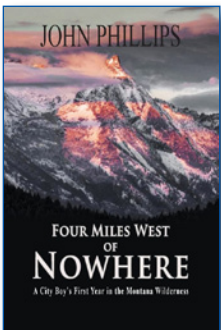
The holidays are bursting with exciting new books that make great gifts.

Four Miles West of Nowhere: A City Boy's First Year in the Montana Wilderness

By John Phillips (Pronghorn Press) \$19.95

John Phillips has crafted a hilarious diary of his retirement journey from Michigan to remote Darby, Montana, population 745. No Starbucks, no traffic light. He introduces you to the town's quirky inhabitants

and his encounters with nature in his life at the mountaintop home he shares with his wife. To this fauna-rich utopia Phillips adds broken snowplows, a reclusive ex-smuggler, threatening winters, electricity famines, and heartfelt ruminations about fly fishing, guns, survival, forest fires, irritating neighbors, helpful neighbors, a voluptuous barber, septic tanks, alcohol, and pre-existing conditions.



100 Slopes of a Lifetime: The World's Ultimate Ski and Snowboard Destinations

By Gordy Megroz (National Geographic) \$35

This ultimate skier and snowboarder bucket list for all levels takes you through 100 snow experiences, from Utah and Colorado to Japan, Switzerland, Morocco, and Alaska. Filled with beautiful National Geographic photography, wisdom from experts, need-to-know travel information, and practical tips, this inspirational guide is divided by interest and skill level. Also included are après ski activities including getting up close with elk, Europe's longest toboggan run, and some of the world's finest cuisine.



**Our Oldest Companion: The Story of the First Dogs**  
By Pat Shipman (Belknap Press) \$25.95  
How did the dog become man’s best friend? Anthropologist Pat Shipman untangled the genetic and archaeological evidence of the first dogs. She tells how scientists are shedding new light on the origins of the unique relationship, revealing how deep bonds formed between humans and canines as our guardians, playmates, shepherds, and hunters.

**Wish You Were Here**  
By Jodi Picoult (Ballantine Books) \$28.99  
Diana O’Toole is perfectly on track with all her life plans. She’s certain her boyfriend, Finn, a surgical resident in New York City, is about to propose on their romantic getaway to the Galápagos, days before her 30th birthday. But then Covid-19 changes things. Finn must stay behind at the hospital, but he assures her she should still go. Everything goes awry. Completely isolated and stranded, luggage lost, Wi-Fi nearly-non-existent, hotel shut down due to the pandemic, and the whole island under quarantine. She ends up connecting with a local family and finds herself examin-

ing her relationships, her choices, and herself.

**The Last Goodnight**  
By Kat Morgan (Kensington Publishing), \$26  
A cold case is heating up, and with another body turning up, one private investigator, Ellie, is hot on the trail of a killer, with the help of the rancher, Kade, who hired her to deliver justice. From corporate Denver high-rises to posh Vail mansions, Kade and Ellie sense the killer is closing in again, and this time Ellie is the target. Kade must risk everything to save the woman he’s coming to love before she becomes the next one to die.

**Infamous**  
By Minerva Spencer (Kensington Publishing) \$15.95  
“Bridgerton” fans won’t want to miss this new holiday love story. Once the reigning beauty of her social set, Celia, whom the newspapers dubbed Lady Infamous, has fallen on hard times and is practically destitute, her reputation in shreds. When Celia is forced to attend a society wedding as a companion to an elderly guest, she must confront the clique she once com-

manded, the gentleman she’d once hoped to marry, and the powerful man who ruined her life a decade before and is threatening to do so again.

**To the River’s End**  
By William W. Johnstone and J.A. Johnstone (Kensington Publishing) \$12.95  
An epic saga based on true events of the untamed American West Frontier, with the trailblazing fur trappers and the mountain men who lived it. Where nature is cruel, violence lurks behind every tree, and where only the strongest of the strong survive. The American Fur Company is sending Luke Ransom, a seasoned trapper, hunter, and master of his trade, to the now-famous Rendezvous at Green River. When he encounters a fellow trapper under attack by Indians, his life takes an unexpected turn. A new friendship is forged in blood. And a dangerous new journey begins.

Until next month (and next year!), happy reading.  
*The staff at the Covered Treasures can be contacted at books@ocn.me.*

November Library Events

Holiday closures announced, ramp continues to progress

*By Harriet Halbig*  
Patrons are all welcome to take advantage of the library’s resources, including access to computers, printing and faxing services, and a variety of newspapers.

To reserve a meeting room, go to the ppld.org website under special services, meeting rooms. Select a room and a date and time. We recommend that you have more than one date in mind as the room is now also being used for some group meetings such as book clubs and some library programs.

To view the programs available, go to programs on the website and search by location. Some programs are virtual and some are in person.

The framework for the ramp to the Palmer Lake

Library now extends to the level of the door (see photo). Once the ramp is complete, some interior work will need to be done before reopening the branch.

The Monument Library continues to be closed on Thursdays due to staffing shortages.

Please note that all Pikes Peak Library facilities will be closed all day on Dec. 24 and 25. They will also close at 4 p.m. on Dec. 31 and remain closed all day on Jan. 1.

Happy holidays from the library.  
*Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me.*

**Right:** Viewed from the west, the new ADA-compliant ramp now extends to the level of the library entrance.  
*Photo by Harriet Halbig*



Palmer Lake Historical Society, Nov. 18

World War II ski troops: 10th Mountain Division

*By Sharon Williams*  
On Nov.18, the Palmer Lake Historical Society (PLHS) welcomed Marine Corps Col. (retired) Tom Duhs who quickly brought us into the realities of time and place in the history of the ski troops of the 10th Mountain Division during World War II (WWII).

During the late 1930’s, Hitler’s Nazi invasion of Austria, Stalin’s forces moving across Poland, and the Soviet’s storming of Finland forced Britain and France to declare war on Germany in 1939.

By 1940, Finland was effectively fighting on skis against the cumbersome, mechanized equipment of the Soviets which limited them to roadside defenses.

The U.S. formally entered the WWII European Theater on Dec. 11, 1941, four days after the events of Pearl Harbor when Germany declared war on the United States.

In 1942, \$31 million was appropriated to build Camp Hale in Colorado at an elevation of 9,244 feet in the White River National Forest along the Eagle River near Leadville. This rugged environment provided the necessary cold weather mountain terrain for crucial U.S. combat training. By 1943, the complex was comprised of 800 structures to accommodate an infantry division of 15,000 and a mule school of 3,500 mules, followed by the arrival of 250 women from Basic Training to operationally support the encampment as drivers, mechanics, nurses, and supply management.

The 87th Mountain Infantry Regiment was the first unit of ski troops to be activated. The 1st Battalion was activated at Fort Lewis, WA on November 15, 1941. On November 6, 1944, the division was reorganized to become the 10th Mountain Division. The



**Above:** Camp Hale, CO in 1943 during the height of training and mobilization to Europe. *Photo courtesy Tom Duhs program collection*

87th was one of three regiments that made up the Division.

Presenter Tom Duhs is an avid military history buff, has co-written two novels, a screenplay, and separately authored another book, and a ten-episode mini-series. Growing up in Colorado, he learned to ski at a young age. Upon graduating from Colorado State University, he was commissioned in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1977 and retired as Colonel of Marines in 2008. His extensive mountain military experience included winter deployments to Norway for multi-nation NATO exercises, and he later served at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center as a skiing and climbing instructor and certified Marine



**Above: Left:** Tom Duhs, Colonel of Marines (retired), presenter of PLHS WWII ski troop program. *Photo by Sharon Williams. Right:* WWII recruitment poster for military ski and mountaineering training, circa 1941. *Photo courtesy Tom Duhs program collection; caption by Sharon Williams.*

Corps Mountain Leader doing all training, course development, assessments and evaluations. Today, he continues to provide lectures throughout Colorado.

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The Palmer Lake Historical Society (PLHS) monthly programs are presented at 7 p.m. every third Thursday of the month at the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce Community Room, 166 Second Street, Monument. There is no December program. The next PLHS monthly meeting will resume in the new year, Jan. 20, 2022. For info call 719-559-0837 or click on [www.palmerdividehistory.org](http://www.palmerdividehistory.org).  
*Sharon Williams can be reached at sharonwilliams@ocn.me.*

High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

Are holiday plants safe for pets and kids?

*By Janet Sellers*  
In winter when the outdoors is rather drab, we often want to cheer up with plants indoors. Our holiday trees and wreaths do cheer us up, but there are many caveats about plants around pets and children.

I’m a dauntless plant lover, but as I looked into pet-safe plants, I realized I had a lot of surprising plant supervillains at my house. Some are not too bad, but I decided that even a little danger isn’t worth having around.

We once had a young cat at Christmastime who liked to climb the Christmas tree and would knock it over in the middle of the night with a crash to our dismay. We ended up tying the top of the tree to the ceiling. That sounds hilarious, but as it turned out,



the next year when this cat tried her pranks, I was ready and had sprinkled powdered cayenne pepper on the lower branches. She never climbed the holiday tree again.

Most of the live trees such as fir, spruce, and pine make excellent Christmas trees and are only mildly toxic to pets and people, but the conifer oils and needles could stick into paws or upset tummies or mouths. Cats are highly sensitive to nearly all essential oils and natural pine oils. We wouldn't let pets or children ingest those, or

chew on artificial trees, so we need to keep a keen eye on our little ones. Holly is traditional for wreaths, but it's toxic, too.

Poinsettias, native to Southern Mexico, are known to upset tummies, but many tropical plants that thrive indoors where it's warm are poisonous to pets. Pothos, cyclamen, sago palm, jade plant and many common holiday plants are actually deadly to pets. All parts of amaryllis, narcissus and bulb plants, and the peace lily are deadly, and parts of the aloe vera plant can

harm a dog's digestive system. It makes one think that a terrarium is a really good idea.

While it's never good to let pets or children play with or nibble on indoor potted plants, another thing to consider is that organic soil may be the safest because there may be toxins in non-organic plant soil such as pesticides or pathogens. Even organic potting soil without added pesticide and poisons can harbor pathogens that could lurk below its surface, but organic potting soils are more apt to have beneficial

organic matter that suppresses harmful microbes. There is so much to know. Let's all keep up on these things just to be safe.

Safe indoor plants for the holidays include Christmas cactus, moth orchids, African violets, bromeliads, and thornless roses, all perennials that bloom indoors for months at a time and bring us joy year after year.

*Janet Sellers is an avid nature and plant lover. She welcomes your plant and garden tips at janetsellers@ocn.me.*

On the Trail (in memory of Tim Watkins)

## Santa Fe Open Space update



**Above:** The Santa Fe Open Space (SFOS) is making great progress and is still scheduled to open before the end of the year. Ross Williams, El Paso County community services department park planner, reports that the trail system fencing, and interpretive display are done, and trail and entrance signs are being worked on. *Photo by Steve Pate*

### Correction

According to John Stansfield, during his presentation sponsored by the Palmer Lake Historical Society on Oct. 21, the Long Expedition camped at the headwaters of Monument Creek July 10-12, 1820. OCN's *On The Trail* column last month incorrectly reported the expedition came through our area in 1812. We sincerely regret the error.

*Steve Pate can be contacted at stevepate@ocn.me.*

Art Matters

## Million-dollar doodles



*By Janet Sellers*

Many people of all ages doodle and benefit from doodling. Artists create their ideas most often with doodles to explore ideas. Many people take up doodling professionally or as amateurs, sketching for decoration, artwork, or to unwind. Doodling can be done anywhere, anytime.

It turns out that doodling is a very specific mind-altering activity of the default network of the brain helping us to remember at least 29 percent more information than non-doodlers. We all have endured meetings and must remember what happened, make decisions, and transform ideas into reality. The doodles of 26 of our presidents have been collected proving that they did it, too. The Ulam spiral, a popular visual aid for mathematicians, was developed by Stanislaw Ulam based on a doodle he made while attending a conference.

Doodles can fetch quite a sum, too. A sketch of a bear by Leonardo Da Vinci, a doodle the size of a post-it note, sold at a Christie's auction on July 8, 2021 for nearly \$12 million. It has been displayed at major institutions including the National Gallery in London, the Louvre Abu Dhabi, and St Petersburg State Hermitage Museum.

Interestingly, the prevailing state of mind of the doodler is never known except to the doodler. We like to make sense of our lives by filling in gaps with coherent stories or doodles. Srinil Pillay, MD, contributor to the Harvard Medical School Health blog reported, "Doodles fill these gaps, possibly by 'activating the brain's time travel machine' allowing it to find lost puzzle pieces of memories, bringing them to the present, and making the picture of our lives more whole again. With this greater sense of self and meaning, we may be able to feel more relaxed and concentrate more."

We can get out our pencils and a scrap of paper and unwind by doodling. We might even discover our inner inventor or Picasso in our spare moments. At least we will captivate our attention on a page and help our memory and peace of mind by doodling.

### Holiday art event

Friends of Fox Run Park will host a holiday art benefit sale at Southwinds Fine Art Gallery, December 10 to 12. Fri. 4:00 to 9:00 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Sun. 12:00 to 4:00 p.m. 16575 Rollercoaster Rd., 80921.

*Janet Sellers is a local artist, doodler, writer, and teacher, with local and global arts involvement from her studio and in the community. janetsellers@ocn.me.*

## Snapshots of Our Community

### Cruisers elects new board, Nov. 3



**Above:** The Tri-Lakes Cruisers Car Club of Monument held its annual election of officers on Nov. 3. Jim Nab is taking over as president from Lon Wartman, who held that office the last three years. Don Ostrander is the new vice president. Epifanio Maestas will be treasurer, and Becci Lane will be secretary. From left, Secretary Becci Lane, Vice President Don Ostrander, Treasurer Epifanio Maestas, and President Jim Nab. *Photo by outgoing President Lon Wartman.*

### Furrow Road extension, Nov. 4



**Above:** On Nov. 4, El Paso County invited the public to learn about the Furrow Road extension project. Deputy County Engineer Josh Palmer, Traffic Engineer Chris Bland, and consultants Brent Hypnarowski and Dave Krauth gave a brief presentation and then answered questions from the audience. Some residents were concerned about drivers cutting through the new extension from Highway 105 to Higby Road, and speeding through their development. The presenters said they are in favor of traffic diversions, such as roundabouts, speed humps and horizontal and vertical deflections to reduce speeds. Pedestrian crossings and bike lanes will also be installed. For additional questions, please email dotweb@elpasoco.com and put Furrow Road in the subject line. *Photo by Jackie Burhans. Caption by Allison Robenstein.*



**Above:** Roald Dahl's "Matilda The Musical," was presented at the Lewis-Palmer High School theatre on Nov. 5, 6 and 7. Performers included student actors and musicians from LPHS and Lewis-Palmer Middle School. *Photo by Steve Pate*

## Support Our Community.

## Shop Tri-Lakes and Black Forest!



## Forest appreciation walk, Nov. 13



**Above:** On Nov. 13, community members joined the Friends of Fox Run Park for the annual forest appreciation walk in the park in honor of Native American Heritage month. The group paused for a photo at one of the culturally modified trees (CMT) known as the Grandmother tree easily seen beside the hiking trail. The group discussed forest ecology, the complex history of the land and the people who lived in the area many thousands of years ago as well as the present-day need to protect the living legacy of the old growth forest and CMTs. *Photo by Marlene Brown, caption by Janet Sellers.*

## Ring the bell, Nov. 15



**Above:** From left, Palmer Lake resident Andrena Craig and volunteer bell ringer John Howe at the Monument Safeway on Nov. 15. The Annual Salvation Army Red Kettle campaign began on Nov. 12 and volunteer bell ringers aside red kettles can be found outside many stores. Salvation Army Captain Joseph McFee started the campaign in December 1891 in San Francisco after he noticed many poor people going hungry. The funds provide free holiday meals for the needy and assistance to families and individuals in financial crisis all year. Virtual donations can also be made at [www.give.salvationarmy.org](http://www.give.salvationarmy.org). *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*

## PL Little Free Libraries



**Left:** You may have noticed those wooden boxes filled with books around Palmer Lake and wondered what they might be. They are called Little Free Libraries, and their purpose is to create more community places for kids and adults to enjoy books. Take a book, leave a book and be a positive part of reading and literacy in Palmer Lake. Thanks to all our book lovers within Palmer Lake who have contributed books or supplied one of these Little Free Libraries for all to enjoy. You can register your library and add it to the world map at

<https://littlefreelibrary.org>. The red library in the photo was made by one of the parks commission chairs, Greg Feuerhaken. It will be installed in Glen Park close to the playground. *Photo provided by the Town of Palmer Lake.*

## St. Peter Holiday Boutique, Nov. 13



**Above:** About 1,000 people attended the 11th annual Holiday Boutique and Bake Sale at St. Peter Catholic Church on Nov. 13. The event featured about 50 vendors of traditional crafts such as pottery, woodworking, quilting, candles and soaps. The bake sale was especially successful as patrons bought cookies, pies, homemade candies, and breads. Last year's event was held in the parking lot because of COVID-19. *Photo by Harriet Halbig*

## TLCA benefit for PLPD, Nov. 13



**Above:** On Nov.13, the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA) hosted a benefit concert for the Palmer Lake Police Department (PLPD). Smooth jazz band Flying Circus, led by drummer and former PLPD officer Tracy Quinn, provided the musical entertainment for the evening. They played a mix of jazz classics from Bob James and others along with originals. TLCA Executive Director Dr. Michael Maddox said the TLCA "wanted to show its support for the police department's efforts in the community and offer it a greater sense of appreciation." A portion of the concert's proceeds will go toward equipment and other needs within the PLPD. According to the PLPD's website ([www.townofpalmerlake.com/police](http://www.townofpalmerlake.com/police)), two full-time officers, including Chief Jason Vanderpool, and part-time officers provide 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week service. Information on upcoming TLCA events, including the Janie Fricke Christmas Show, is at [www.trilakesarts.org](http://www.trilakesarts.org). *Photo by David Futey.*

## PL time capsule filled, Nov. 21



**Above:** Residents of Palmer Lake met on Nov. 21 to fill a time capsule with artifacts telling the town's story. The chest, made of wood from the town hall's old roof beams as well as wood used for the new trusses, will be stored in the town hall after construction is complete. The chest is lined with Tyvek and crafted by TN Parker Construction which is working on the roof replacement. Organized by Palmer Lake Board of Trustees member Glant Havenar and local resident Jack Armstrong (L to R in the inset), the contents include local restaurant menus and T-shirts, programs and a football from Palmer Ridge High School, items from the fire and police departments, Palmer Lake Historical Society books, Palmer Lake Star art, clips from Our Community News, the town's 2022 budget, and a lot more. The time capsule will be opened in 50 years in 2071. For more information on the Palmer Lake time capsule see: <https://www.townofpalmerlake.com/administration/page/creating-50-year-town-time-capsule>. *Photos by Jackie Burhans*



## Pronghorn antelope



**Above:** These two pronghorn share their space with a front loader across from Jackson Creek Senior Living on Nov. 3. One of them seems more interested in the photographer than the heavy machinery. *Caption by Michael Weinfeld. Photo by Creighton A. Smith.*

## Palmer Lake display at DIA



**Above and left:** Palmer Lake was one of 15 Colorado towns invited by Denver International Airport (DIA) to assemble a display that represents iconic winter festivals. The display will run until March 2022 in the Jeppesen Terminal, Ansbacher Hall, Level 6 North, before A-Bridge security. The display highlights four Palmer Lake winter activities: The star lighting on Sundance Mountain, the yule log celebration, holiday lights contest, and Winterfest. Photos, objects, artifacts, art, and explanations describe the four annual events. Collaboration between Palmer Lake

Historical Society members, Patricia and Gary Atkins, Roger Davis, and Palmer Lake Parks Commissioner Reid Wiecks led to the display assembly. To learn more about this exhibit, see [www.flydenver.com/about/art\\_culture/colorado\\_winter\\_festivals](http://www.flydenver.com/about/art_culture/colorado_winter_festivals). To see all photos in this exhibit go to <https://images.flydenver.com/Art-at-DIA/Temporary-Exhibits/Colorado-Winter-Festivals/>. Palmer Lake photos start at photo number 29. *Photograph provided courtesy of Denver International Airport. Caption by Reid Wiecks*

## MPD and Walmart deliver meals



**Above:** On Nov. 23, the Monument Police Department (MPD) and the Jackson Creek Walmart partnered to provide and deliver Thanksgiving meals to three Tri-Lakes area families in need. An MPD news release says the families were identified with input from Lewis-Palmer School District 38 and other local organizations. The meals included turkeys and ingredients to create traditional sides. Monument Police Chief Sean Hemingway thanked "elected officials for supporting the department to engage the community in this way, Walmart for partnering with us in this effort, and a special mention to the families of our officers who support them in this and other efforts for the Tri-Lakes community." Hemingway presented Walmart representative Charlotte Fraser with the department's Challenge Coin as a show of appreciation. Others participating in the deliveries included Mayor Don Wilson, Board of Trustee Darcy Schoening, MPD officers including Community Resource Officer Andrew Romano and Walmart representative Crystal Martinez. *Photo by David Futey*

## Cruisers donate to TLC, Nov. 19



**Above:** On Nov. 19, more than a dozen members of the Tri-Lakes Cruisers Car Club of Monument donated more than 400 pounds of turkeys, game hens, and vegetarian meatless roasts for client families of Tri-Lakes Cares (TLC). This is an annual holiday tradition for the Cruisers. TLC Food Program Manager Jessica Myers (near the center of the photo wearing a white jacket and holding a doll) called it a "significant" donation. Cruisers board member Vinny Gallagher is behind her wearing a blue jacket. TLC Development Specialist Christine Bucher is in the red jacket on the left. *Photo by Bill Beeson.*

## Alpaca extravaganza



**Above:** The Southeastern Colorado Alpaca Breeders held their 16th annual Holiday Alpaca Extravaganza at the Black Forest Community Club during the weekend of November 27-28. Visitors enjoyed the indoor farm booths and the outdoor pens with baby alpacas. Alpaca fibers are extremely soft, fluffy and very warm. Indoor farm booths were

filled with warm hats, apparel, mittens, toys and more, made with fibers from the local alpaca farms. **Left:** Claudia Swenson shows visitors how to spin alpaca yarn on her wooden spinning wheel. Swenson enjoys teaching the soothing practice of spinning with a wooden drop spindle and takes these calm animals to hospitals and libraries as therapy alpacas. *Photo by Janet Sellers.*



## EIS volunteers help fire victims



**Above:** Emergency Incident Support volunteers helped the Red Cross feed 50 people who were evacuated when their apartment in Colorado Springs caught fire on Nov. 24. The residents were taken to a Red Cross shelter at Cheyenne Mountain High School. EIS volunteers come from Palmer Lake, Monument, Black Forest, Jackson Creek, all the way to Security and Fountain. EIS volunteers help Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District and Wescott Fire Protection District. They also respond to El Paso County Sheriff and Office of Emergency Management alerts and help El Paso County Public Health with vaccine clinics. From left are EIS President Gary Nelson and board members Mary Williamson and John Hildebrant, who is also TLMFPD board chair. Photo by Gary Nelson.

## Anderson book signing, Nov. 27



**Above:** Retired El Paso County Sheriff turned artist, sculptor, author, and historian, John Wesley Anderson signed copies for admirers of his newest book *A to Z Colorado's Nearly Forgotten History 1776-1876* on Nov. 27 at the Covered Treasures Bookstore in Monument. In the book, he researched and created 26 stories of forgotten history of the Colorado Territory from Native American oral history to the pioneers that settled in the frontier and contributed to its shared history. Photo by Marlene Brown.

## Chili and Star Lighting, Nov. 27



**Above:** Every year since 1935, excluding the years during WWII, the Star lighting has been a holiday tradition in Palmer Lake. On Nov. 27, the tradition continued with the Palmer Lake Fire Department chili supper at the Palmer Lake Elementary School. As usual, hayrides were available, as was Santa. Over 1,000 people purchased tickets in advance for the chili supper. Proceeds go toward maintaining the Star. Following the Star lighting, an official ribbon-cutting ceremony took place at the new pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks. Pictured at right are PLFD Chief Chris McCarthy with some of his staff and his two 12-year-old sons, one of whom intends to become a firefighter. Photos by Steve Pate



## Why advertise in OCN?

- OCN is mailed FREE to every resident and business in the Tri-Lakes area. We mail more than 21,400 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 \$94,800!
- 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 Janet Sellers

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

Monument Santa on Patrol

This year Santa and his First Responder Elves will have selected families visit them at the Monument Police Department on Sat., **Dec. 18**. Santa is asking for the community's assistance identifying families with hardships or needs. If you know a family who would benefit from this event, submit the following information in the below format to Santa@tomgov.org no later than Mon., **Dec. 13**: Name and age of child/children in household, name of parent(s), address, phone number, brief description of why the family is a good candidate. Families will be selected based on the description of need in the nomination, so please provide enough detail in your submission. All toys collected will be donated by Santa on Patrol. If you are considering donating to any program this holiday season, we encourage you to remember our local children and their needs. New, unwrapped toys may be dropped off at the Monument Police Department located at 645 Beacon Lite Road or at any Toys 4 Tots box located at various businesses throughout the Tri-Lakes area. Gift cards should be delivered to the Monument Police Department. Toys should be dropped off no later than Mon., **Dec. 13**, 5 p.m. so there is time to get them ready to be delivered by Santa and his elves. Please contact Sgt. Andrew Romano at aromano@tomgov.org if you have any questions.

Seniors Driver's License Electronic Renewal

With the implementation of the Driver's License Electronic Renewal By Seniors Act (HB21-1139), Colorado seniors now have the permanent ability to renew their driver license or identification card online, but there are new laws to understand. Information is online via mycolorado.state.us. Some restrictions apply to drivers aged 21-80, and drivers over 80 need a special doctor's statement. Coloradans who are concerned about an elder family member's ability to drive should email dor\_mvhelpdesk@state.co.us.

DMV online and kiosks

Clerk & Recorder's Office provides motor vehicle and driver's license services. 30+ services at mydmv.colorado.gov. Renew registration online or at a kiosk. Make appointments. check in for appointments and wait where it's convenient for you. The DMV encourages Coloradans to skip the trip and use its online services whenever possible. So before your next trip to the DMV, remember to save time, go online. Visit DMV.Colorado.gov/Save-time for more information. See epcdrives.com.

CO 21 (Powers Blvd.) & Research Pkwy. construction

Work will be completed in fall 2022 and will consist of replacing the current at-grade intersection with an innovative Diverging Diamond Interchange by constructing an overpass for Powers Boulevard/Colorado Highway 21 traffic to move continuously through the intersection over Research Parkway. For many more details and rendering of final configuration, including a video showing new traffic flow, see https://cccpi.net/cdot-powers-research.pdf.

I-25 and CO 21 (Powers Blvd) Interchange now open

A new interchange and a ¾-mile stub of state highway CO 21 (Powers Blvd.) connecting I-25 to Voyager Pkwy opened Oct. 29. This \$65 million project is the first part of a two-part plan. Funding has not yet been secured to connect CO 21 from its current terminus at CO 83 & Interquest Pkwy. to Voyager Pkwy. For a map of the new interchange and connection from I-25 to Voyager Pkwy., see https://i25powers.com/.

MVEA scholarships

Mountain View Electric Association's (MVEA's) college scholarship program deadline is **Jan. 17**. For details, see www.mvea.coop/community/youth-programs/scholarships/.

MVEA planning broadband service

Mountain View Electric Association is planning to provide reliable, affordable, high-speed fiber broadband service to all its 51,000 members in the next six years. MVEA and Conexon Connect teams are now designing and mapping the network. For more information about MVEA and Conexon Connect's fiber-to-the-home project, visit www.mvea.coop/broadband.

MVEA offers rebates

For information on MVEA's energy efficiency rebates, visit www.mvea.coop/save-energy-money/rebates/, or call 800-388-9881. See ad on page 32."

Palmer Lake Arts District forming

The newly forming Palmer Lake Arts District is looking for working artists interested in participating in an artist cooperative located in Palmer Lake, working artists and persons to organize and manage the coop. For inquiries contact beforeshegrid@aol.com.

Photos of past Palmer Lake festivities needed

If you have photos to share from past Palmer Lake winter festivities (Winterfest, Yule Log, Star Lighting, etc.), please share them to the town website info@palmer-lake.org with a description of the timeframe and festivities. The Parks Commission will be gathering memorabilia to assemble an exhibit.

Work around Palmer Lake Town Hall

The ramp reconstruction work on the town museum and library is well underway. Also, Town Hall roof restoration will continue into December. Thus, staff is alerting residents that typically stroll through the town green area to be cautious and respectful of the construction equipment and process. Furthermore, due to construction crew parking in the area lots, it may be limited parking. Please feel free to contact the office to assist with business that can be conducted by phone or email for your convenience. Phone: 719-481-2953, Email: info@palmer-lake.org. Unfortunately, the Town Hall will not be available to rent for events through this time. Thank you for your understanding, and we look forward to celebrating both projects getting completed!

Palmer Lake Vaile Museum to reopen

Plans to reopen soon with several new exhibits upon completion of the improved handicap accessible ramp. We are in great need of volunteers to carry on the work of the society. Visit www.PalmerDivideHistory.org or call 719-559-0837.

Noxious weed removal is our responsibility

As a private property owner, you are responsible for the removal of noxious weeds on your land to keep them from spreading. We often see plants we think are pretty that are really noxious. To see photos to help you identify local noxious weeds and get tips on removal and control, see https://assets-communityservices.elpasoco.com/wp-content/uploads/Environmental-Division-Picture/Noxious-Weeds/Noxious-Weed-Control-Book.pdf.

Area code required for local (719) and (970) calls

Colorado customers with numbers in the 719 and 970 area codes should dial 10-digits (area code + telephone number) for all local calls. They will still count as local calls. Check your safety and security alert devices to be sure they are programmed with 10-digit dialing. You can still dial just three digits to reach 711 (relay services) and 911 (emergency services) and other local three-digit services including 211, 311, 411, 511, 611, 711 or 811 are currently available in

your community, dial these codes with just three digits.

Openings on Monument boards

The Town of Monument has openings on its Planning Commission and Board of Adjustments. For more information, visit and to download an application, go to http://townof-monument.org/261/Available-Board-Openings.

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 youths, 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; or visit https://trilakescares.org/volunteer/.

Tri-Lakes Cares needs us

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 Nicole Pettigrew, director of Volunteers and Community Partnership, at 719-481-4864 Ext. 111; communityengagementmanager@tri-lakecares.org; or visit www.tri-lakescares.org.

YMCA Jingle Jog, Dec. 11

One more race and one great cause: Jingle Jog, Sat., **Dec. 11**. See details at ppymca.org/raceseries.

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.

WMMI seeks volunteers

WMMI has positions for docents/tour guides, front desk, landscaping, and building and maintenance. For more details, contact Loretta, 719-488-0880, or email Volunteer@wmmi.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 719-488-0076, and leave a message or visit www.coloradoseniorhelp.com.

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@TriLakes-Seniors.org. Senior Beat can also be viewed online at www.TriLakesSeniors.org.

Foot Care Clinic

A registered nurse examines your feet and provides foot care advice, toenail trimming. Silver Alliance Senior Center across the street from the Tri-Lakes YMCA, on the Lewis-Palmer High School campus. By appointment only, 303-698-9496. \$40 charge unless insured through Kaiser. Info: Nurse Association, 719-577-4448.■

Our Community Calendar

By Janet Sellets

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

GOVERNMENTAL BODIES

- **Donald Wescott Fire Protection District board meeting**, Thu., **Dec. 2**, 4 p.m. Station 1, 15415 Gle-neagle Dr. Meetings are usually on the third Tuesday. The DWFPD board is not allowing the general public to attend in person. Virtual instructions via website/administrator. For information, call Executive Administrator Stacey Popovich at 719-488-8680 or see www.wescottfire.org.
- **Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District board meeting**, Fri., **Dec. 3**, 6:30 p.m. Station 1, 18650 Highway 105, Zoom meeting. Find joining instructions at www.tlmfire.org or contact Jennifer Martin, 719-484-0911. Normally meets fourth Wed. Info: www.tlmfire.org.
- **Forest Lakes Metropolitan District, Pinon Pines Metropolitan District 2 & 3 board meeting**, Mon., **Dec. 6**, 4 p.m. at 2138 Flying Horse Club Drive, Col-

orado Springs. In person and virtually. For virtual joining instructions and updates see www.forest-lakesmetrodistrict.com.

- **Monument Board of Trustees meeting**, Mon., **Dec. 6**, 6:30 p.m., Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Normally meets first and third Mon. Info: 719-884-801, www.townofmonument.org/260/Board-of-Trustees for remote attendance links.
- **El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) regular meeting**, every Tue., **Dec. 7** etc., 9 a.m. View agendas and meetings at www.agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso. BOCC land use meetings are being held every first and third Tuesday of the month as needed at 1 p.m. Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade Ave., Suite 150, Colo. Springs. Info: 719-520-6430.
- **Tri-Lakes Wastewater Facility Joint Use Committee meeting**, Tue., **Dec. 7**, 10 a.m., 16510 Mitchell Ave. Meets second Tue. Info: Bill Burks, 719-481-4053.
- **Palmer Lake Sanitation District board meeting**, Wed., **Dec. 8**, 9 a.m., call-in only: 650-479-3208, Access Code 76439078, 120 Middle Glenway. Meets second Wed. Info: 719-481-2732. www.plsld.org.
- **Monument Planning Commission meeting**, Wed., **Dec. 8**, 6 p.m. Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Meets second Wed. To see the


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- 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: 719-884-8028, [www.townofmonument.org](http://www.townofmonument.org).
- **Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District board meeting**, Wed., **Dec. 8**, 7 p.m., via Zoom only for public attendees. For updates and joining instructions visit [www.bffire.org](http://www.bffire.org).
  - **Palmer Lake Board of Trustees meeting**, Thu., **Dec. 9**, 5 p.m. Palmer Lake Elementary School Library, 115 Upper Glenway. Usually meets second and fourth Thu. Info: 719-481-2953, all for current meeting location. [www.townofpalmerlake.com](http://www.townofpalmerlake.com).
  - **Monument Academy School Board meeting**, Thu., **Dec. 9**, 6 p.m. at the East Campus in the band room. 4303 Pinehurst Circle. Meets second Thu. Info 719-481-1950, <https://www.monumentacademy.net/school-board/board-meeting-minutes/>.
  - **Triview Metropolitan District board meeting**, Tue., **Dec. 14**, 5:30 p.m., 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302, Monument. Normally meets third Thu. Info: 719-488-6868, [www.triviewmetro.com](http://www.triviewmetro.com).
  - **Monument Sanitation District board meeting**, Wed., **Dec. 15**, 9 a.m., 130 Second St. Zoom meeting. Find joining instructions on the website. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-4886, [www.colorado.gov/msd](http://www.colorado.gov/msd).
  - **Northern Delivery System meeting**, Wed., **Dec. 15**, 5:30 p.m., Bear Creek Elementary School, 1330 Creek-side Drive. For more information visit: <https://triviewmetro.com/projects/northern-water-delivery-system/>.
  - **Academy Water and Sanitation District board meeting**, Wed., **Dec. 15**, 6 p.m. Public can join the Skype meeting: <https://join.skype.com/PAcujKTn-7Nr>. Check the website for a link: <https://academy-wsd.colorado.gov/notices-and-alerts>, Wescott Fire Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Dr. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-0711, <https://academywsd.colorado.gov>.
  - **Palmer Lake Town Planning Commission meeting**, Wed., **Dec. 15**, 6 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-2953, [www.townofpalmerlake.com](http://www.townofpalmerlake.com).
  - **El Paso County Planning Commission meeting**, Thu., **Dec. 16**, 9 a.m. Regional Development Center, 2880 International Circle, Colo. Springs. Meetings are live streamed on the El Paso County News & Information Channel at <https://www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel>. Normally meets first & third Thu. (if required). Info: 719-520-6300, <https://planningdevelopment.elpasoco.com>.
  - **Donala Water & Sanitation District board meeting**, Thu., **Dec. 16**, 1:30 p.m., 15850 Holbein Dr. Meets third Thu. Check the website for the access code for the electronic meeting Thu. Info: 719-488-3603, [www.donalawater.org](http://www.donalawater.org).
  - **Woodmoor Water & Sanitation District board meeting**, Mon., **Dec. 20**, 1 p.m., 1845 Woodmoor Dr., Monument. Meets second Mon. Info: 719-488-2525, [www.woodmoorwater.com](http://www.woodmoorwater.com).
  - **Lewis-Palmer School District 38 board meeting**, Mon., **Dec. 13**, 6-10 p.m., Learning Center, 146 Jefferson St., Monument. Normally meets third Mon. Livestream on the district's YouTube channel: [www.youtube.com/user/LPSDCCommunity](http://www.youtube.com/user/LPSDCCommunity), agenda and supporting documents at <https://go.boarddocs.com/co/lewispalmer/Board.nsf/vpublic>. Info: 719-488-4700, [vwood@lewispalmer.org](mailto:vwood@lewispalmer.org), [www.lewispalmer.org](http://www.lewispalmer.org).
  - **Monument Board of Trustees meeting**, Mon., **Dec. 20**, 6:30 p.m., Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Normally meets first and third Mon. Info: 719-884-801, [www.townofmonument.org/260/Board-of-Trustees](http://www.townofmonument.org/260/Board-of-Trustees) for remote attendance links.
  - **Woodmoor Improvement Association board meeting**, Wed., **Dec. 22**, 7 p.m., Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. Meets fourth Wed. Info: 719-488-2693, [www.woodmoor.org](http://www.woodmoor.org).
  - **Palmer Lake Board of Trustees meeting**, Thu., **Dec. 23**, 5 p.m. Palmer Lake Elementary School Library, 115 Upper Glenway. Usually meets second and fourth Thu. Info: 719-481-2953, all for current meeting location. [www.townofpalmerlake.com](http://www.townofpalmerlake.com).
  - **D38 District Accountability Advisory Committee (DAAC) meeting**, No meeting in December. Usually meets five times per school year on the second Tuesday of the month (Oct., Nov., Jan., Feb., Apr.). <https://www.youtube.com/user/LPSDCCommunity>. Info: 719.481.9546, [vwood@lewispalmer.org](mailto:vwood@lewispalmer.org).
- WEEKLY & MONTHLY EVENTS**
- **Group of Artists (GOA), SUSPENDED**, Normally meets first Sat. 10 a.m.-noon, 304 Hwy. 105, Palmer Lake. Lively discussions about art topics, general studies on creativity. Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA) Info: 719-481-0475, [info@trilakesarts.org](mailto:info@trilakesarts.org). Additional information available on Facebook.
  - **Monument Hill Kiwanis Club meeting**, every Sat., 8 a.m. [www.MHKiwanis.org](http://www.MHKiwanis.org), [MonumentHillKiwanis@gmail.com](mailto:MonumentHillKiwanis@gmail.com) for details; 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 and 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).
  - **Neighborhood Net**, every Sat., 10 a.m. Amateur radio operators practice for emergencies on weekly re-

- peater 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**, every Sat., 1-4 p.m., 2805 Roberts Dr., Monument. Info: 719-488-3019, [www.thewineseller.net](http://www.thewineseller.net).
  - **Palmer Lake Art Group**, Sat., **Dec. 11**. Usually meets second Sat.. A variety of art programs are offered after the social gathering and business meeting. Guests welcome. Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy. 105, Palmer Lake. Info: 719-460-4179, [www.palmerlakeartgroup.com](http://www.palmerlakeartgroup.com).
  - **Tri-Lakes Parkinson's Disease Support Group, SUSPENDED**, third Sat.; if you need any help, please call Syble or Barry. 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. Info: Syble Krafft, 719-488-2669; Barry (group president), 719-351-9485.
  - **Faithful Friends discussion group**, usually third Sat., 3-4:30 p.m. Wesley Owens Coffee. Sept. 18: Our women's discussion topic: "What is your forwarding address after that last heartbeat?" Info: Ellen, 303-526-5000 or Sandi, 719-237-3359. All ladies are welcome to our open discussion group.
  - **The Centering Prayer Group at Black Forest Community Church**, Sat., **Dec. 4**, 8:30-10 a.m. The Old Log Church. Meets the first Sat. of every month. Centering prayer opens and closes the meetings with discussion and fellowship in between; open to all. Contact Rev. Roger Butts, 719-433-3135, for information.
  - **Lions Club Bingo**, Sat., **Dec. 11**, 8:30 a.m.- 1 p.m., **Dec. 29**, 5:30-10 p.m. Tri-Lakes Lions Club's portion of the proceeds benefit those in need in the Tri-Lakes community. Updated info and location: Jim Naylor, 719-481-8741 or [www.trilakeslionsclub.org](http://www.trilakeslionsclub.org).
  - **Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church**, every Sun., 8 and 11 a.m. traditional, 9:30 a.m. contemporary. Both in-person (no registration necessary) and livestream at [www.tlumc.org/live](http://www.tlumc.org/live). Watch live or on replay: [www.facebook.com/tlumc](http://www.facebook.com/tlumc), [www.youtube.com/tlumc](http://www.youtube.com/tlumc). Info: 719-488-1365, [www.tlumc.org](http://www.tlumc.org). 20256 Hunting Downs Way, Monument. See ad on page 2.
  - **Fuel Church Sunday Service**, every Sun., Connection 9:30-10 a.m. New Service times, 10:45 a.m. Live service streaming at [www.fuelchurch.org](http://www.fuelchurch.org) at 11:25 a.m., Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Nursery and kids' service. Non-denominational, spirit-filled. Need prayer? Email us [info@fuel.org](mailto:info@fuel.org). See ad on page 2.
  - **Al-Anon Zoom Meeting, Just for Today Online**, every Mon., 9 -10 a.m. Zoom Meeting ID: 889 4142 7446. Email: [justfortodayonline@gmail.com](mailto:justfortodayonline@gmail.com) for meeting password.
  - **Women's A.A. Step Study**, every Mon., 6:30 p.m., meeting remotely, check for details. Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 Baptist Rd. Park in west lot. Info: 866-641-9190.
  - **Monument Life Recovery Group**, every Mon., 6:30-7:30 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. Day-care provided for children under age 11. Info: 303-946-2659, [www.liferecoverygroups.com/meetings/life-recovery-group-3/](http://www.liferecoverygroups.com/meetings/life-recovery-group-3/).
  - **Amateur Radio W0TLM** (Tri-Lakes Monument Radio Association), Meets third Mon. All amateur radio operators or those interested in becoming one are welcome. Info: Joyce Witte, 719-661-9824, [Joyce-witte@gmail.com](mailto:Joyce-witte@gmail.com); [www.W0TLM.com](http://www.W0TLM.com).
  - **Essentrics Fitness Program at Senior Center**, every Tue., 9 a.m. & Thu. at 10 a.m., Lewis-Palmer High School modular building across from the YMCA, on Jackson Creek Pkwy. Registration & info: Sue Walker, 719-330-0241, [www.trilakesseniors.org](http://www.trilakesseniors.org).
  - **GriefShare Support Group**, Meets the last Tue., 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 and Hospice Care to host a 13-session grief support group in Monument. RSVP & info: Sue Walker, 719-330-0241.
  - **Bingo by the American Legion**, every Tue. Game sales start at 5 p.m., games start at 6 p.m., the Depot Restaurant, Palmer Lake. Proceeds go to scholarships and other community support activities. Info: 719-488-8659, <http://legionpost9-11.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, <https://ppymca.org/locations/north/tri-lakes/tri-lakes/holly-brand>
  - **Children's Literacy Center**, every Tue. & Thu., 5:30-6:30 p.m. Provides free one-on-one literacy tutoring to Tri-Lakes children in grades 1-6 who are reading below grade level. Tutoring is at the Tri-Lakes Senior Center. For more information, to become a volunteer tutor, or to enroll your child, visit [www.childrensliteracycenter.org](http://www.childrensliteracycenter.org) or email Christine Jeffson at [Christine@childrensliteracycenter.org](mailto:Christine@childrensliteracycenter.org).
  - **D-38 HomeSchool Enrichment Academy**, every Tue. or Thu. 2021-22 school year, for K-8 grade home-schooled students to cultivate a love of learning through explorations in art, music, PE, science, and more. [www.lewispalmer.org/hsea](http://www.lewispalmer.org/hsea).
  - **Al-anon meeting: Monument Serenity**, every Tue.,

- 7:30-8:30 p.m., find online and phone meetings. 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).
- **Senior Citizen Luncheons, Connections Café sites**, every Wed. 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. Food Pantry offers a "pick up only" model for clients. Mon.-Fri., noon-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 second Thu. Reservations are requested at 719-884 2300.
  - **Colorado Springs Philharmonic Guild Listening Club**, third Wed. each month, free virtual event. Maestro Wilson will conduct monthly hour-long programs. RSVP at [www.cspguild.org](http://www.cspguild.org)
  - **Gleneagle Sertoma**, first and third Wed., 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. El Padrino, 13425 Voyager Pkwy., Colorado Springs. The longest continuously serving civic service organization in northern El Paso County features a program speaker addressing local topics of interest. Duane Gritzmaker, [dwgritz@gmail.com](mailto:dwgritz@gmail.com) or 719-649-9220.
  - **Senior Social**, fourth Wed. except Nov. and Dec. 1-4 p.m., 12455 Black Forest Rd. Info: [www.aarpchapter-1100blackforest.weebly.com](http://www.aarpchapter-1100blackforest.weebly.com).
  - **Tri-Lakes Church of Christ** Wednesday night fellowship classes, every Wed., 6-7:30 p.m., 20450 Beacon Lite Road, Monument (corner of Beacon Lite & County Line Roads). Info: 719-488-9613, [gregsmith@trilakeschurch.org](mailto:gregsmith@trilakeschurch.org), [www.trilakeschurch.org](http://www.trilakeschurch.org).
  - **Kehilat, Zoom Bible Study**, every Wed., 6:15 p.m. Bring your hungry and tired so they can be filled and more blessed. Ms. Williams, 719-453-6279.
  - **Tri-Lakes Cruisers**, first Wed., 7 p.m. A nonprofit car club. Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce community room, with numerous activities and events each month. Club membership applications are now being accepted and are available on the website: [www.tl-cruisers.weebly.com](http://www.tl-cruisers.weebly.com) on the "ABOUT" page.
  - **Black Forest AARP Potluck Lunch & Meeting**, Second Wed. 12455 Black Forest Rd. Meetings info: Stan, 719-596-6787, [www.aarpchapter1100blackforest.weebly.com](http://www.aarpchapter1100blackforest.weebly.com).
  - **Senior Bingo**, third Wed. Silver Alliance Senior Center, Lewis-Palmer High School campus. Masks required. Space is limited to 16 participants. RSVP & info: Sue Walker, 719-464-6873, or email [sue@monumentalfitness.com](mailto:sue@monumentalfitness.com).
  - **Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7829**, third Wed. via Zoom; POC Delbert Zehrung, 559-362-3223. 7 p.m., The Country Club at Woodmoor, 18945 Pebble Beach Way, Monument. New members welcome. Info: Post Commander Joe Carlson, 405-326-2588, [jcarlson@vfw7829.org](mailto:jcarlson@vfw7829.org), [www.vfw7829.org](http://www.vfw7829.org).
  - **VFW Auxiliary to Post 7829**, third Wed., meeting by videoconference, 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 relative of a veteran who served on foreign soil during war or other military action, you may be eligible. Info: Kathy Carlson, 719-488-1902, [carlsonmkc@aol.com](mailto:carlsonmkc@aol.com).
  - **Networking breakfast**, first and third Thu., Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce in person or via Zoom 166 2nd Street Monument 7:30 - 9 a.m. free registration at [www.TriLakeschamber.com](http://www.TriLakeschamber.com).
  - **Fuel Church Griefshare**, every Thu., 5:30-7:30 p.m. 643 State Highway 105, Palmer Lake. See ad on page 3.
  - **Al-Anon meeting: Letting Go**, every Thu., 9-10:15 a.m. at Ascent Church, 1750 Deer Creek Rd., Monument. For additional information go to [www.al-anon-co.org](http://www.al-anon-co.org)
  - **A.A. Big Book Study**, every Thu., 7 p.m., Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 W. Baptist Rd. Call 425-436-6200, access code 575176#.
  - **Bridge, SUSPENDED**, meets second Thu. Silver Alliance Senior Center, 1300 Higby Rd., Monument, Sept.-June Info: [www.blgc.org.html](http://www.blgc.org.html).
  - **Ben Lomond Gun Club, SUSPENDED**, second Thu., Tri-Lakes Chapter. Info: <https://blgc.org>.
  - **Friends of Fox Run Park**, No meeting Nov. or Dec. but special events for each month. Usually meets fourth Thu. Zoom meeting, 6-7 p.m., email [friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com](mailto:friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com), they will email you the link the day of the meeting. Join the growing group to learn about volunteering and supporting the park for safety, trails, trees, education, more. Info: [marlenebrown@ocn.me](mailto:marlenebrown@ocn.me).
  - **Palmer Lake Historical Society**, No December meeting. Monthly meetings are normally held 7 p.m. every third Thu. at Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce Bldg.-Community Rm., 166 Second Street, Monument. Next monthly meeting will resume in the new year, Thurs., Jan. 20, 2022. Info: 719-550-0837, [www.palmerdividehistory.org](http://www.palmerdividehistory.org).
  - **Gleneagle Women's Club, membership luncheon**, third Fri., June-Sept various venues, 12 activity groups, i.e., hiking, bridge, etc. Guests welcome. For information contact Sarah George 719-487-2985.
  - **Tri-Lakes Women's Club Monthly Luncheon**, Fri., Dec. 10, 11 am-2 pm. Wedgewood Black Forest, 12375 Black Forest Rd. The Colorado Springs Children's



- Chorale will entertain with festive Holiday music. The Chorale transforms the lives of children and leaves an enduring impact on families, audiences and communities. Meetings are open to all members of Tri-Lakes Women's Club. To become a member, or learn about the club, visit our website at [www.tlwc.net](http://www.tlwc.net) or email [sleggie26@me.com](mailto:sleggie26@me.com).
- **Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS)**, every **Fri.**, 8 a.m., Monument Chamber of Commerce, 166 Second St., Monument. Info: Terry, 719-684-4912, or visit [www.TOPS.org](http://www.TOPS.org).
  - **Silver Center Book Club**, second **Fri.**, 11 a.m.-noon, Senior Center across the street from Tri-Lakes YMCA, on Lewis-Palmer High School campus. All are welcome. Coffee & snacks served. RSVP & info: Sue, 719-330-0241.
  - **Monumental Impact Network Event**, second **Fri.**, 5 p.m. for high school students, businesses and community members interested in technology and engineering. Support high school students in technology, engineering, and entrepreneurship career pathways. 55 Adams St. Info: 719-387-7414, [enable@monumentaltalimpact.org](mailto:enable@monumentaltalimpact.org). Through Fall 2021
  - **Monumental Impact Open Builds**, every **Fri.**, 3-6 p.m. Bring your own technology, engineering, and/or entrepreneurial projects or just come for the camaradery. Open to high school students and adults. 55 Adams St. Info: 719-387-7414, [enable@monumentaltalimpact.org](mailto:enable@monumentaltalimpact.org). Through fall 2021

SPECIAL EVENTS

- **First annual Trails End Christmas Market**, **Fri.-Sun., Dec. 3-5**, Vendors and live music performance. <https://downtownmonument.org>.
- **Kiwanis Monument Hill Club - North Pole Craft Fair**, **Sat., Dec. 4**, North Pole craft fair at Tri-Lakes is back featuring live holiday music, choirs, bands and local talent. free admission with donation of non-perishable food item, cash, or a board game for Tri-Lakes cares, Grace Best Education Center, 66 N. Jefferson St.
- **Monument Small Town Christmas**, **Sat., Dec. 4**, 10 a.m.- 6 p.m. Visit Santa and Mrs. Claus, pet the reindeer, ride on an old-fashioned hayride, crafts and other traditional Christmas activities, Downtown Monument. <https://downtownmonument.org>.
- **Annual Monument tree lighting at Limbach Park**, **Sat., Dec. 4**, 3 p.m.- 6 p.m. activities and performances beginning at 3 p.m. Santa will arrive at 5 p.m. to light the tree and visit with kids. Festive Music performed by local schools and churches. Please bring a canned food item for Tri-Lakes Cares or a new unwrapped toy for Santa on Patrol. <https://downtownmonument.org>.
- **Covered Treasures Bookstore, Small Town Christmas Book Signings**, **Sat., Dec. 4**, 11-3 p.m.. Ana Crespo signs her picture book about the Black Forest fire, *Hello Tree* (11-1); Deb Faulkner, author, and Christina Cookson, photographer, sign *Henry's Denver Palace* (1-3); Jean Alfieri signs two new titles in the Zuggy, The Rescue Pug series, *Ooky, Spooky Stories* and *Sweet Dreams* (1-3). Covered Treasures Bookstore, 105 Second Street, Monument. (719) 481-2665.
- **Kiwanis Monument Hill Club, Colorado Gives Day**, **Tue., Dec. 7**. Join us in making a difference for youth and community. Please go online at [coloradogives.org](http://coloradogives.org) and select Monument Hill Foundation. See ad on page 14.
- **Tip a Cop**, **Thu., Dec. 9**, 5-9 p.m., Texas Roadhouse locations in Monument, 8th St. and Powers Blvd. Please come and support the El Paso County Sheriff's Office annual event in support of Colorado Special Olympics.
- **O Holy Night Christmas concert**, **Fri., Dec. 10**, 7 p.m., free, for the whole community, accepting donations to benefit Tri-Lakes cares. Saint Peter Catholic Church, 55 N. Jefferson St., Monument. See ad on page 2.
- **Southwinds Fine Art Holiday Art Sale**, **Fri.-Sun. Dec. 10-12**, **Fri.**, 4-9 pm: reception and meet the artists; **Sat.**, 10-6 pm: features J. Clark Wider and local artists; **Sun.** 12-4 pm: artists holiday objet d'art. Refreshments, make-and-take-it ornaments courtesy of Friends of Fox Run Park. Southwinds Fine Art studios and gallery, 16575 Roller Coaster Rd., 80921. See ad on page 2.
- **Friends of Fox Run Park annual tree "wood cookie" ornament party**, **Sat., Dec. 11**, 1-3 p.m., meets at the warming hut by the Gazebo and ponds at Fox Run Park. More info: [friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com](mailto:friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com).
- **Covered Treasures Bookstore Book Signings**, **Sat., Dec. 11**, 1-3 p.m. Tanja Britton, *Places and People of the Pikes Peak Region* and Mike Pach, *Colorado Springs Then and Now* will sign from 1-3. Covered Treasures Bookstore, 105 Second Street, Monument.

Support Our Community. Volunteer with OCN!

Please join us today! Meet a group of interesting and committed people. Learn new skills—use your enthusiasm and creativity to benefit our community and celebrate unfiltered information. Please call John Heiser, Publisher, at (719) 488-3455, or email [johnheiser@ocn.me](mailto:johnheiser@ocn.me) to see how you can contribute. Contact us today!

- (719) 481-2665.
- **Palmer Lake Annual Yule Log Hunt**, **Sun, Dec. 12**, 1 p.m., due to renovation of the Town Hall, it will be held outside on the Village Green, 42 Valley Crescent, Palmer Lake. Traditional hot wassail served. Info: Yule Log Committee: 719-649-7066 Niall Byrne or 719-338-7076 Kurt Voelker. All are welcome. Committee meets 3rd Thu. each month. Info: 719-559-0837, [www.palmerdividehistory.org](http://www.palmerdividehistory.org).
  - **Monument Santa on Patrol**, Toys should be dropped off no later than **Mon., Dec. 13**, 5 p.m. They will be distributed **Sat., Dec. 18**. For more information or if you know a family who would benefit from this event please see <https://www.townofmonument.org/486/Santa-on-Patrol> or email Sgt. Andrew Romano at [aromano@tomgov.org](mailto:aromano@tomgov.org).
  - **Covered Treasures Bookstore Book Signings**, **Sat., Dec. 18**: Jana Eklund, *Open Bar* and Michele Sample, *Can I Hold Your Hand* will sign from 1-3. Covered Treasures Bookstore, 105 Second Street, Monument. (719) 481-2665.
  - **Woodmen Valley Chapel: Christmas Eve Services**, **Fri., Dec. 24**, 11 a.m., 1 p.m., 3 p.m., and 5 p.m. family fun with carols, candlelight and engaging teaching from the Bible. A program for kids and adults with special needs at 3 p.m. Monument campus of Woodmen Valley Chapel, at Bear Creek Elementary, 1330 Creekside Drive, Monument. See ad on page 13.
  - **Christmas Eve at Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church**, **Fri., Dec.24**, 5 p.m. contemporary worship with Holy Communion: 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. traditional worship with Holy Communion. 20256 hunting Downs Way, Monument. Check for website updates [tumc.org/Christmas](http://tumc.org/Christmas). See ad on page 8.
  - **Kiwanis Monument Hill Club, bell ringing for the Salvation Army** runs through **Dec. 24**.
  - **Pikes Peak Brewing Company**, free gift cards with merchandise or gift card purchase through **Dec. 24**. Pikes Peak Brewing.com. See ad on page 12.
  - **Free hearing consultation**, through **Dec. 31**. A Better Hearing Center, 574 Hwy. 105, Monument. See ad on page 16.
  - **Cornerstone Cleaners**, 10% off alterations through **Dec. 31**. 1030 W. Baptist Road, near King Soopers. See ad on page 4.
  - **Eagle Wine & Spirits**, 10% off of a variety of spirits through **Dec. 31**. Baptist Road next to King Soopers. See ad on page 3.
  - **Monumental Med Spa**, free gifts with purchase of gift certificates, through **Dec. 31**. at the Loft, 4 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. See ad on page 7.
  - **Monument Cleaners**, specials through **Dec. 31**, 15932 Jackson Creek Pkwy., in Monument Marketplace. See ad on page 5.
  - **Noel Relief Centers**, complimentary first visit through **Dec. 31**. 719-359-9947, 1840 Woodmoor Drive, Suite 109, Monument. See ad on page 2.
  - **Pure Romance** by Amy Yocum-vos, special offer when you book a Stop & Shop appointment through **Dec. 31**. 719-963-0764, [pureromance.com/AmyYocum-vos](http://pureromance.com/AmyYocum-vos). See ad on page 4.
  - **Speed-Trap Bistro**, open 8-2 p.m. **Wed.- Sun.**, later on **Fri.-Sat.**, freshly made breakfast and lunch, full barista & bar service, evening light fare. Local art, merchandise, special orders. 84 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. See ad on page 5.
  - **Free fire mitigation assessment**, The Community Tree Service, 719-299-7717, [theCommunityTreeService.Com](http://theCommunityTreeService.Com). See ad on page 9.

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.

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

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

- **The Living Room plants**, special offers through **Dec. 31**. 12229 Voyager Pkwy, Suite 100, Colorado Springs, 719-203-6189. See ad on page 5.
- **YMCA** special offers through **Dec. 31**. Join online at [ppymca.Org](http://ppymca.Org). See ad on page 6.

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

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. 1

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

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



OCN is published on the first Saturday of each month by Colorado Cooperative Association  
**Our Community News, Inc.**  
*John Heiser, President*  
**(719) 488-3455—FAX: (828) 645-9022**

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