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



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Issue #242 — Volume 21 Number 4 — Saturday, April 3, 2021

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WHERE TO FIND OFFICIAL COVID INFORMATION
<https://covid19.colorado.gov/>

Local Events

The COVID-19 situation continues to present scheduling challenges for area governance entities and other organizations. Readers should assume that event information published in this issue is subject to change and information should be confirmed a day or two before the event by calling the information number or checking the organization's website. Dates are shown for events even though the event has been canceled or suspended. The date indicates when the event was planned to be held or when it would normally have been held.

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

- **WMMI, Family Day**, Sat., Apr. 10, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
- **Monumental Impact's Internship Symposium**, Mon., Apr. 12, 4 p.m.
- **Career Pathways Explorer Program**, Mon. Apr. 19 & 26 May 3, 4 p.m.
- **Celebrate Earth Day - Help Friends of Fox Run Park**, Sat., Apr. 24, 1 p.m.
- **Purge the Spurge**: Exchange your spurge for FREE groundcover, Sat. Apr. 24, 1-3 p.m.
- **Our Community News mailing days**, Thu. -Fri., Apr. 28-30. We need your help for an hour or two.
- **Arbor Day in Monument**, Sat., Apr. 30, 10 a.m. Waterwise Garden demonstration and tree planting.
- **Black Forest Arts & Craft Guild sale**, Wed.-Sun, Apr. 28- May 2
- **Ready Set Go! - Wildland Fire Prevention/Mitigation Day**, Sat. May 15, 9-noon.



Wild weather - see pages 24 and 27
Photo by Michael Weinfeld.

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Circulation

Print Run: 21,920
Mail Delivery: 21,306
Stacks: 614

Community honors first responders



Above: The week of March 15, Linsay Leite, left, and Gordon Reichal, far right, created and delivered baskets of food and goodies made fresh by Leite at Wesley Owens Coffee to Tri-Lakes fire stations in appreciation of our first responders. The baskets were delivered over several days to get them to each shift. Many community members contributed, funding the gift baskets of snacks, breakfasts, coffee, and more, including a generous gift certificate for first responder families to have a fun outing together at Wesley Owens Coffee. *Photo by Janet Sellers.*

El Paso Board of County Commissioners, March 2, 9, and 16

County seeks public comment on draft Master Plan

By Helen Walklett

The draft county Master Plan was presented to the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) in March as the county released the initial draft for public feedback. Also in March, the commissioners approved the memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the 2021 Black Forest slash and mulch program.

Comments sought on draft Master Plan

At its March 9 meeting, the BOCC received a presentation on the county's draft Master Plan from consultants Houseal Lavigne Associates and Planning and Community Development staff as the document was launched for public review and comment.

Craig Dossey, executive director, Planning and Community Development, said, "We have master plan documents that are 30-something years old that we still rely on when we're presenting land use applications to you all. Obviously, these documents are out of date so an update, as we've talked about in the past, was well overdue. So this is an exciting time. This is a moment where we have the first initial draft, and it is just that, it is a draft, not the final version, that we are ready to give you an overview on but also to release to the public. We are soliciting comments and review from the public because we want to make sure that this document really serves as a voice for all of the residents, business owners, the leaders of El Paso County."

Dossey emphasized that the plan would be the first to look at the county as a whole. The plan will guide local development for the next 20 to 30 years.

The 150-page document is available for review on county's website at <https://elpaso.hplanning.com/pages/draft-plan-outreach>. The county

is asking for comments by April 9. An updated draft will then be reviewed by the county Planning Commission at a first hearing scheduled for May 5. It is hoped that the plan will be adopted at a second hearing on May 26.

Black Forest slash and mulch program

At its March 16 meeting, the BOCC unanimously approved the 2021 MOU with the Black Forest Slash and Mulch Committee (SAMCOM), the nonprofit responsible for the program's daily operation.

The wildfire mitigation program, which is staffed entirely by volunteers, accepts slash (tree debris including branches, leaves, needles, etc.) from residents that is ground into mulch, which is available free of charge to the public. Educational programs and events provide information to the public about forest health, soil conservation, safe chainsaw use, noxious weeds, and forest pests.

Under the MOU, the county contributes \$35,000 toward grinder expenses, and SAMCOM provides \$10,000 toward the costs. The details of the agreement are unchanged from those of 2020.

The site, at the southeast corner of Shoup and Herring Roads, plans to open for the 2021 season for slash drop-off on May 1. Normal business hours will be Saturdays 7 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sundays noon-4 p.m., and Tuesday and Thursday evenings 5-7:30 p.m. The last date for slash drop-off is Sept. 12. There is a \$2 drop-off fee for slash.

Free mulch will be available for self-loading from May 15 through Sept. 15. For large quantities of mulch, an end loader is available on Saturdays, 7 a.m.-4 p.m., charging \$5 for two cubic yards.

BOCC (Cont. on 2)

El Paso County Planning Commission, March 18

Cloverleaf development rezoning recommended for approval

By Helen Walklett



At its March 18 meeting, the El Paso County Planning Commission recommended for approval a rezoning application for the proposed Cloverleaf development northeast of the Highbly Road and Jackson Creek Parkway intersection.

Cloverleaf rezoning

The Planning Commission heard a request by ProTerra Properties LLC to rezone its 37.22-acre property from RS 20000 (residential suburban) to RS 5000 (residential suburban). The property is the redevelopment part of the sale of the "Walters Open Space" land. ProTerra's involvement has directly facilitated the ability of Woodmoor Open Space Coalition (WOSC) to purchase the rest of the property, which will be retained as public open space. Residents purchased small portions of land as extensions to their own properties as part of the fundraising efforts to buy the open space. Their purchases totaled about 24 acres. *See www.ocn.me/v20n6.htm#wosc. See map on page 24.*

Andrea Barlow of NES Inc., on behalf of the applicant, told the commissioners that the land proposed for the rezoning was an undeveloped parcel of the Woodmoor Placer subdivision, platted in 1972. It had been intended to be a golf course but was never developed. She said the property was used by residents as open space and informal trails had been created but that the land had always been privately owned.

EPC PC (Cont. on 3)

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BOCC (Cont. from 1)

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Other decisions

- March 2—the commissioners voted to approve the preliminary release of a bond for \$79,775 following the completion and satisfactory inspection of subdivision improvements at the Gleneagle Residential Infill Filing No. 1 development at the former Gleneagle Golf Course.
- March 2—approved the preliminary release of a bond for \$1.15 million following the completion and satisfactory inspection of improvements at the Forest Lakes

Filing No. 4 development

- March 16—approved an agreement between the Department of Public Works and BSP Ridgepointe Colorado LLC to acquire property from the latter for \$45,500 as part

of the construction improvements to the Struthers Road and North Gate Boulevard intersection.

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



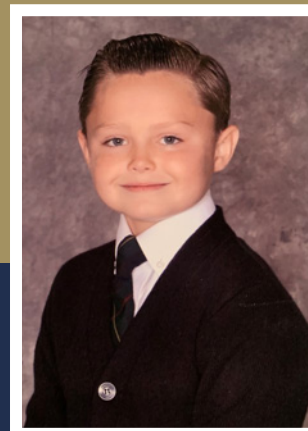
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EPC PC (Cont. from 1)

WOSC purchased 70 acres of the site in May 2020 to be kept in perpetuity as open space. The replat request associated with this will be submitted separately by WOSC.

If the rezoning application is approved, then the applicant will seek approval of a preliminary plan and final plats for the creation of the 144 single-family residential lot Cloverleaf development. Lots 1-141 would be built on the rezoned land; lots 142, 142, and 143 would be built on two separate parcels under their existing RS 20000 zoning.

The commissioners heard that the developer had made changes to the project following neighborhood meet-

ings. Certain lots would be restricted to single-story ranch homes. At a meeting specifically with the residents of Leggins Way, concerns were raised about groundwater, access, small lots adjacent to larger lots, a walking trail at the rear of properties, and overall density. As a result, lot sizes bordering Leggins Way were increased, the trail was removed, and an additional landscaping buffer and a groundwater capture system were added. There will also be sidewalk, crosswalk, and signage installed to facilitate pedestrian access to Lewis-Palmer High School.

Barlow said some 130 neighbors had signed a petition in support of the develop-

ment.

Nina Ruiz, planning manager, Planning and Community Development, told the commissioners that the county had notified 145 adjacent property owners and had received no official responses. At the Planning Commission hearing, three members of the public spoke in favor of the development and three spoke against. Tish Norman, a South Woodmoor resident and director of WOSC, reiterated that ProTerra had made numerous changes to the proposed development to meet neighbors' concerns and that WOSC could not have purchased the land for open space without its involvement. She added that

deed restrictions would be placed on the WOSC-owned land to ensure it remains open space in perpetuity.

Speaking against, Andrei Bedoya, a Leggins Way resident, voiced density and access concerns. He said the RS 5000 zoning would encroach heavily on the character of the area. He called for significant improvements to be made at the intersection of Bowstring Road and Leggins Way where he said traffic would be significantly increased and would be a safety concern, particularly given that students walk to the

high school in that area. Maggie Bedoya expressed wider concerns about the planning process and the changing nature of Monument. Another speaker also raised concerns about the increase in traffic and the safety issues this would cause.

In rebuttal, Barlow said many of the comments would be addressed during the preliminary plan process and reminded the hearing that this was just a rezoning application. She said the Traffic Study had gone through a rigorous review process with the county

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and that the two detention ponds' purpose was to direct water into the storm sewer.

Commissioner Becky Fuller said she was impressed with the cooperation between the developer and WOSC and that she thought the members of the

public who had spoken would see their concerns addressed further on in the process.

Commissioner Jay Carlson voiced his concerns with the density, which he felt was not a great transition between the proposed homes and those existing, adjacent homes that are zoned RS 20000. Commissioner Eric Moraes shared Carlson's concerns about transitions. He said, "I don't see how it's [the RS 5000 zoning district] in compatibility in all directions."

Commissioner Tom Bailey said he found it a sensible infill plan and a "very compatible compromise."

Applauding WOSC and its work with the developer, he said, "If you want open space, you have to own it."

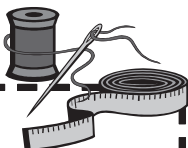
The commissioners voted 9-1 to recommend the application for approval. Moraes was the no vote.

The application is now due to be heard at the El Paso Board of County Commissioners meeting on April 13.

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

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Sheriff's Office reports recent mail thefts

By Brent Ambuehl,
crime prevention coordinator of
the Criminal Intelligence Unit,
El Paso County Sheriff's Office

Mar. 18: The Sheriff's Office is seeing a large volume of mailbox thefts occurring in District 2. Recently a community mailbox was damaged and mail left on the ground in the 6700 block of Burgess Road. About three weeks ago, the Terra Ridge neighborhood near Black Forest Road and Hodgen Road was also victimized. Specifically, numerous community-type mailboxes have been damaged and mail stolen from within. Residents are reporting they are finding mail, both open and unopened, strewn around the ground. There have also been many individual mailboxes tampered with along outlying streets.

Please check your incoming mail on a daily basis. Do not leave mail sitting in your mailbox overnight. Also, please mail your outgoing mail preferably at a postal annex. We understand this can be an inconvenience, but criminals are stealing whatever mail they can get their hands on, and mailing your items at a



Above: Thieves in El Paso County are breaking into community mailboxes like this one as well as individual mailboxes. *Photo courtesy of KOMO news.*

postal annex provides another level of security that your mail will not be tampered with.

If you see suspicious vehicles driving around slowly and checking mailboxes, please get a description of the vehicle and possibly a license plate number. Do not approach the vehicle because that can become very dangerous, but a cellphone picture is priceless to us when it comes to establishing potential suspect/s or vehicles. As the Sheriff's Office starts to establish suspect vehicle information or suspect information, I will forward that information to the community and block captains.

If you believe you were a victim of mail theft, please contact the Sheriff's Office at 719-390-5555 and the postal inspector at 877-876-2455.

If you have any questions, I can be contacted at BrentAmbuehl@elpasoco.com or 719-520-7151. I am also available to talk to your community or neighborhood groups to discuss further crime activities in your specific areas. Please help us help you by being vigilant and taking some of the above crime prevention steps to help you from becoming a victim of mail theft. Have a great day and stay safe.

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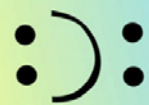
By Amy Yocom-Vos

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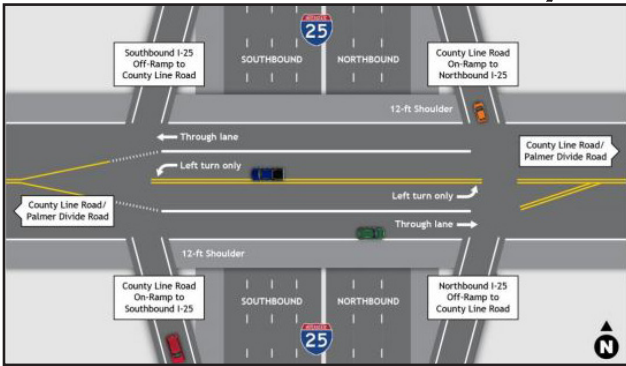


County Line Road bridge reconstruction

By Lisa Hatfield

This spring, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) will begin reconstruction of the County Line Road bridge over I-25 in Monument. The bridge will double to accommodate one through-lane and one turn-lane in each direction, and shoulders on each side.

First, crews will build the outside lanes of the bridge. Then, they will demolish the existing bridge structure and reconstruct the bridge to connect it to the new outside lanes. Major reconstruction of the County Line Road bridge is expected to be complete by the end of 2021.



Above: County Line Road bridge reconstruction. Graphic courtesy of CDOT.

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ramps.

The Project Hotline is at 720-745-5434 or www.codot.gov/projects/i25-south-gap.

Lisa Hatfield can be contacted at
lisahatfield@ocn.me.

Monument Board of Trustees, March 1

Board continues to contend with Promontory Pointe access issue

By Allison Robenstein

The Monument Board of Trustees approved several land use developments and two water-use requests during the March 1 regular meeting.

Trustee Jim Romanello was noted absent at the beginning of the meeting.

Sanctuary Pointe Filing No. 9

Sanctuary Pointe Filing No. 9 consists of 71.28 acres, 45 single-family lots, and six tracts that will serve as open space, pocket parks, landscaping, public utilities, and drainage. The tracts will be owned and maintained by Triview Metropolitan District. The filing includes Evening Sunset Place, Panoramic Drive and Tree Woods Court, off Sanctuary Rim Drive. The lots range from 16,000 square feet to 3.3 acres.

The Planning Commission approved the request at its Feb. 10 meeting. The Santa Fe Trail runs along the west side of the development and will not be inhibited by the development. See www.ocn.me/v21n3.htm#mpc.

During the public hearing portion, resident Ken Kimple said he wasn't here to stop the build. Instead, he asked the board for its definition of an access road. He said although Gleneagle Drive has been extended to Sanctuary Rim Drive, it has no lighting. The road has no lane marking delineation and is barely wide enough for two-way traffic. Kimple suggested the two bus stops along the roadway for elementary and high school students are often driven through by cars that

simply pass around the stopped buses.

Kimple said residents are hesitant to ask questions of the board because they continue to get "answers they don't think their questions deserve."

Trustee Ron Stephens said, "Traffic in this area has always been a concern of the residents," asking Planner Debbie Flynn to confirm the roadway is a full-fledged road to which she replied, "I believe so."

As a condition of development, an emergency access route from the proposed roundabout where Gleneagle Drive and Sanctuary Rim Drive meet, out to Higby Road, was to be completed with Home Place Ranch Filing 1. The access road would have followed the existing ranch road. See www.ocn.me/v19n12.htm#mbot. However, during the Aug. 17 meeting, the board learned from Brian Behr, manager of Wooded Vista LLC, the Home Place Ranch developer, the "realities of available infrastructure will likely prevent development of the 109 acres for 10 or 12 more years." Meaning the access road is also delayed. See <https://ocn.me/v20n9.htm#mbot>.

Planning Director Larry Manning said an emergency access road is in place, so Stephens asked that the Planning Department request it to be accelerated and made into a full-fledged road.

Mitch LaKind asked Flynn to respond to questions asked during the Planning Commission meeting regarding traffic issues and fire evacuation plans. Former Trustee Greg Coopman had asked for an evacuation plan when Home Place Ranch came before the board but was told it wasn't a requirement for approval. Flynn said, "I believe our town and the county are working on an evacuation plan currently."

UPS Distribution Center

The final plat of the UPS Distribution Center in Falcon Commerce Center was unanimously approved by the board. The 16.91 acres will house a distribution and warehouse center totaling 736,000 square feet. The Planning Commission approved the request Feb. 10.

Flynn project

Flynn asked the board to approve a special review of property at 309 N. Woodward St. The request was for a Use by Special Review, which is a zoning change order only. Robert Flynn (no relation to Debbie Flynn), owner of the property, wrote in a letter to the board, "My wife Amy and I purchased the property at

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Christina Cotton

309 Woodward St. in Monument. We are looking to add a 425 sq ft addition on the north side of the existing house.... We would also like in the very near future to turn the detached garage at the back of the lot into a seasonal snack bar/ice cream shop."

The single-family dwelling had previously been used as a business but will become a permanent home with three bedrooms and two bathrooms. A detached garage will house a walk-up establishment with limited parking.

The Planning Commission approved the request at its Feb. 10 meeting. See www.ocn.me/v21n3.htm#mpc.

Neighbors along the nearby Vista Montana Street are worried about patrons of the ice cream shop perhaps parking along the narrow roadway. Mayor Don Wilson said, "I would consider it an alley." Resident Nancy Swearigen, who lives on Vista Montana, asked if putting "no parking" signs on the road might mean homeowners wouldn't be allowed to park as needed.

Flynn said the no parking signs will be for patrons of the shop and not for the residents, although she did not clarify how code enforcement would know the difference.

The board unanimously approved the zoning change.

Water system interconnect

Town Attorney Andrew Richie presented an intergovernmental agreement with Forest Lakes Metropolitan District to "construct and operate a controlled emergency water system interconnect-

tion" for potable water exchange during an emergency. Water will be supplied on an as-available basis.

The total cost for the project is \$181,170. The town and Forest Lakes will split \$131,000 of the cost, with an additional \$50,000 coming from other sources.

This request was unanimously approved.

Well 10 continues on track

Well 10, the town's newest well, now needs the required electrical set-up to power the motorizations and also needs determination of the pipeline route to the treatment facility. Assistant Public Works Director Steven Sheffield said, "We are left with a straw in the ground" of the next steps to getting the well online.

The request for \$188,639 was unanimously approved.

Public comments

During public comments, Kimple brought a litany of complaints to the board, including:

- An outdoor motion-detection stadium-type light causes light to trespass into numerous Promontory Pointe homes. Kimple said bringing the issue to the local police didn't solve the problem.
- Kimple walked a section of his development that requires fire mitigation. Triview Metropolitan District Manager Jim McGrady walked the space with Kimple, confirming the town is responsible for cutting back overgrown

brush as a precautionary measure.

- A metal wire fence in an area also owned by the town is deteriorating and doesn't meet town ordinance codes.
- Kimple asked that a portion of Baptist Road that doesn't receive much sunshine be plowed or sanded more often. It is "like an ice rink" in the winter months.

Board discussion for affordable housing doesn't go far

Trustee Laurie Clark asked for a discussion on affordable housing, saying issues are still prevalent. "I suggest the board appoint someone to do a feasibility study" to include two trustees, she said. Clark thought the town might be considered as an opportunity zone and perhaps apply for grants. "\$1,400 is not a good price" for affordable housing, said Clark. Town Manager Mike Foreman said the town doesn't qualify for the zones or associated grants.

Stephens was concerned about high-density housing. "The devil's in the details," he said. He said high density, affordable housing will equate to high-rise apartment buildings that would bring too much traffic and turn

the town into a parking lot. Stephens said he was also concerned about the stress high-density housing would have on the school system, noting of renters, "These are people [who] will not be paying property taxes," thus not contributing to infrastructure maintenance costs.

The meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m. Allison Robenstein can be reached at allisonrobenstein@ocn.me.

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Monument Planning Commission, March 10

Three projects recommended

By Kate Pangelinan

The Village at Jackson Creek Preliminary PD Site Plan and Rezone was considered by the Monument Planning Commission (PC) for a second time during the March 10 meeting, joined by two other public hearings and recommendations agenda items: the Monument Industrial Park Final Plat and the Elite Cranes Shop/Office/Storage—Rezone & Preliminary/Final PD Site Plan. All agenda items were recommended for approval and will now be considered—along with summaries of the PC's comments and discussion—by the Monument Board of Trustees (BOT).

Chairman Chris Wilhelmi, Vice Chair Sean White, and Commissioners Bill Lewis, Martin Trujillo, Daniel Ours, Eric Light, and Steve King were all present at the meeting. Wilhelmi recused himself from voting on the Elite Cranes proposal.

Further information about all projects discussed by the PC can be found in the meeting packets located at monumenttownco.documents-on-demand.com. This site is also a good resource for accessing approved meeting minutes, as well as the agendas for upcoming meetings. This latest PC meeting, along with many older ones, can be found recorded on the Town of Monument's YouTube channel at youtube.com/channel/UCdFL08UcqZfDkio5jT6GDA. Citizens may find it easier to search for "Town of Monument" or "Monument Planning Commission" in YouTube's search bar. There was also a Planning Commission training during March this year, available to watch on the town's YouTube page if any citizens are interested.

According to the town's website, planning staff can be contacted by calling 719-481-2954 or sending an email

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Monument Industrial Park Final Plat
Some facts about the Monument Industrial Park, according to Planner Debbie Flynn's presentation, the meeting packet, and discussions during the meeting:

- The site contains roughly

11 acres. Lot 1 is 9.616 acres, and the remaining 1.379 acres, Lot 2, feature a detention pond. This property is located at 15707 Terrazzo Drive, north of the Valero gas station.

- Most of the land is zoned for Planned Industrial Development (PID),

- except for a bit to the south which is zoned for Planned Commercial Development (PCD).
- There are two access roads into this property: Terrazzo Drive, the primary access, and La Campana Drive, the secondary access.
- A warehouse/distribution center is expected to be built on this land, and then divided into separate spaces for rent.
- Andrea Barlow of NES Inc. and Curtis Gibson attended this meeting representing the project.
- The applicant is listed as "Monument Industrial, LLC (Curtis Gibson)" in the packet, and the property owner is listed as "Triview 77 LP (Nate Miller)."

No citizens spoke about this project during the designated Public Comment period, although one attendee noted that he was present and interested in talking about the second agenda item. There was some PC discussion before a motion was presented. It was noted that the 3D renderings provided for this project were helpful, allowing PC members to visualize the designs. In answer to a question about how this development would "add to the natural features of Monument," it was stated that this project would preserve views of the mountains. It is also not expected to reach the maximum height allowable for the zoning.

A question was also raised about how this project may relate to the potential Santa Fe Trail relocation, after which it was explained that this property isn't close to the Santa Fe Trail at all. Any changes involving the Santa Fe Trail are still being deliberated by El Paso County.

In the end, a motion to recommend the Monument Industrial Park Final Plat for approval passed unanimously,

7-0.
Elite Cranes Shop/Office/Storage—Rezone and Preliminary/Final PD Site Plan

Some facts about this project, according to Planner Debbie Flynn's presentation, the meeting packet, and discussions during the meeting:

- This property is located at 940 Synthes Ave. and covers two acres.
- Once completed, this project is expected to feature a shop/office/storage area for the Elite Cranes company, a business that rents out construction cranes. The shop itself will be 5,000 square feet and will be surrounded by a chain-link fence, which will in turn be screened by trees on the east side.
- The area is required to undergo a zone change from PID to Planned Development (PD).
- Elite Cranes is expected to operate 10 hours a day, five days a week. There will be four to six employees. This property is not meant for retail purposes, so customer traffic is not anticipated.
- The applicant is listed in the packet as "Elite Cranes LLC (Sam and Stacie Lowry)," and the property owner is listed as "Villani Partnership LLP (Rocco Villani)."

During the designated Public Comment period, questions raised included what kind of tree coverage would be provided to screen the east side of the building, as well as what sort of potential light pollution would be generated by the development.

Some points explained by the applicant:

- If a crane boom is visible in the air on this property, it will be because something is being unloaded from a truck or maintenance is being performed

on the cranes. This is not expected to happen every day; the cranes usually travel to job sites in a folded-up position.

- The hope is that people passing by will only see trees from the east side of the property. The applicant is expecting to plant the biggest trees possible.
- The business is also not anticipated to be loud, especially in comparison to the nearby train.

A motion to recommend the Elite Frames Final PD Site Plan for approval to the Board of Trustees passed unanimously, 6-0, with Wilhelmi abstaining.

Village at Jackson Creek Preliminary PD Site Plan and Rezone

Some facts about this project, according to Planner Debbie Flynn's presentation, the meeting packet, and discussions during the meeting:

- On Feb. 1, the BOT voted to send this project back to the PC so the PC could consider changes the applicant made to the plans. The PC voted to deny approval for previously presented plans, and the applicant took steps to address its concerns.
- Brett Behnke spoke again, representing Creekside Developers and answering questions about the project.
- Again, the Village at Jackson Creek is expected to be a "live/work/play" community, featuring multi-family housing, restaurants, retail, and other gathering spaces.
- The area would be rezoned from PID to Mixed Use development.
- To address PC concerns, the applicant has revised the previous proposal of 32 housing units per acre to 20 units per acre. The maximum building height has also been adjusted from 90 feet to 75 feet for any buildings within 600 feet of I-25, and then 50 feet for any buildings more than 600 feet from I-25. Behnke compared this to other projects in the area, which allow for buildings climbing up to 90 or 100 feet.
- The applicant is listed in the packet as "Creekside Developers, Inc. (Brett Behnke)," and the property owner is "Jackson Creek Land Company, LLC (Rob Oldach)."

No citizens spoke during the designated Public Comment period.

As for PC discussion and questions, here are some of the points raised:

- Senior living and apartment plans were discussed.
- Final PD site plans are expected to come before the PC before any new businesses move into the site and before anything is built. The applicant is not yet aware which businesses might move into



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the development.

- It was asked whether this “village” is expected to detract from historic downtown Monument, after which Behnke answered that they are searching for locally owned businesses to occupy the space, and that this project is intended to

give the people of Monument more choices.

- The possibility of a playground as part of the development was suggested, and the benefits of employment opportunities for teenagers in the area expressed.
- Some members of the PC don’t like the idea of more

automotive facilities moving into Monument. Concern about potential hotels was also voiced.

A motion to recommend the proposal for approval with conditions concerning maximum building height was approved 4-3, with Ours, Trujillo and Lewis voting against.

For the time being, the public will be able to attend PC meetings through Webex software. Citizens are also afforded the option of calling in to listen to meetings, and if alternate accommodations are needed, the town website states, “Individuals without the ability to participate by phone or computer may contact Drew

Anderson at danderson@tomgov.org or 719-396-0842.” Further information: <http://www.townofmonument.org/meetings/>. The next PC meeting is expected to be held on April 14.

Kate Pangelinan
can be reached at
katepangelinan@ocn.me.

Monument Board of Trustees, March 15

Native Sun Annexation passes; new police vehicles on order

By Allison Robenstein

The Monument Board of Trustees approved the annexation of Native Sun Construction into the town during the March 15 meeting. The trustees also approved four new police vehicles, a liquor license, and a water-use project. Trustees Laurie Clark and Jamy Unruh were noted absent.

Native Sun Construction annexation is approved

Planner Debbie Flynn presented the Native Sun Construction annexation to the board, saying the 10.69 acres of land sits on Woodcarver Road south of Baptist Road and adjacent to the new Falcon Commerce Center.

This was approved at the Jan. 13 Planning Commission meeting. See www.ocn.me/v21n2.htm#mpc.

Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District will provide emergency and fire services,

and the town will provide police services. Utilities and road improvements are not the town’s responsibility. In the board packet, Planning Director Larry Manning wrote, “The town acknowledges sanitary sewer service from the property will be provided by the Forest Lakes Metro District, which will also install a potable well onsite and water transmission lines.”

Ernest Jessup, owner of Native Sun Construction, said he is “really looking forward to this project” and intends be a good neighbor to the town. When Trustee Ron Stephens asked who is responsible for road repairs to Woodcarver Road and snow removal, Jessup said it isn’t the responsibility of the town. Town Manager Mike Foreman said code enforcement representatives will be sent out if the roads aren’t maintained properly.

The development agree-

ment is not yet signed. Manning said, “If the developmental agreement isn’t consummated, the annexation agreement won’t be consummated.”

The annexation passed unanimously but is still dependent on signing the developmental agreement.

Lease four police cruisers

The Monument Police Department will get four new leased vehicles this year. Chief Sean Hemingway said the department is ordering three Chevrolet Tahoe SUV’s and one unmarked special operations vehicle. The town budgeted \$265,000 for the purchase. The four vehicles will be leased over a five-year period, after which time the town can purchase the vehicles for \$1 each. The cost to outfit the vehicles with a police package of lights, cages, siren and striping, patches and insignia is unknown at this time, but the

total cost will not exceed the budget.

The request passed 5-0.

Liquor license approved

Deputy Clerk Erica Romero presented the request for a new salon, Hotsy Totsy, 1495 Cipriani Loop, to serve complimentary alcohol to patrons. Romero said the license application was filed on Feb. 9. John and Jessica Reyes, owners of the salon, said they also intend to host events including Tri-Lakes Business Network International meetings.

A wall separates the reception area from the service area, where alcohol will be offered during client services. The salon’s demographic is women between 32 and 48 years old. The business opened in July 2020.

Tri-Lakes BNI President Tiphany Figurski said the Reyes’ salon is a quality business and will be a “big asset to your community.”

The request was approved unanimously.

Vacating portion of Lincoln Avenue

The board agreed unanimously to sell a portion of the unconstructed portion of Lincoln

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Avenue plus two parcels of land that total about .25 acre to BSLC Monument LLC, the owner of Bethesda Senior Living Center.

The center will use the land to expand parking. At one time, Lincoln was supposed to extend east, but that never occurred.

Layne-Christensen to re-drill well 3

Public Works Director Tom Tharnish said well 3 became faulty last summer. During an investigation, large cracks were found that indicate the end of the well's life. A new re-drilled well will be installed near the current well. The existing pump and motor that were replaced last summer will be reused. Layne-Christensen has been selected to drill the well for \$407,575. It should be operational in early summer.

The project requires drilling a borehole for the surface casting, then drilling the borehole for the well and geologically logging the layers. This project is part of the \$22 million bond approved by the board.

Discussion to discontinue emergency declaration

On March 23, 2020, the board declared a local disaster emergency when the COVID-19 pandemic began. Tonight, the board discussed removing this or-

dinance. According to Town Attorney Andrew Richie and Romero, the town isn't ready to remove it because it still offers benefits. Parts to the ordinance that are still required include:

- Establishes a policy for remote attendance at both the Board of Trustees and the Planning Commission meetings that didn't previously exist.
- Permits electronic signatures rather than in-person signatures that are required by the town code.
- Requests reimbursements for emergency expenses from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and distribute Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) act funds.
- Allows for participation in regional emergency management groups.

Trustee Mitch LaKind asked, "Who is holding us hostage ... in order for us to attend an emergency management meeting ... that we have to have a declaration of our own emergency?"

Romero said the emergency management teams have been a great resource when it comes to applying for grants and requesting reimbursements. The town is expecting \$36,000 in emer-

gency repayments. Richie said that to get the next round of money from the federal government, he suspects there will be a need for the declaration.

LaKind continued, saying remote attendance, working from home, is a thing that happened before COVID as were electronic signatures. However, Richie said, "Remote attendance for trustees is possible should the board pass and set up rules for remote attendance not premised on an emergency." Mayor Pro Tem Kelly Elliott said she has attended remotely during the pandemic while on business trips that wouldn't have allowed her to be present if she had to be at the meeting in person.

Mayor Don Wilson said, "I think board members should be required to make town meetings, and if citizens want to speak at town meetings, they should come to town meetings." Foreman reminded the board to consider the costs of the Webex system used for remote access when deciding any new remote attendance rules. No decisions were made.

Public comments

Resident Cheri Hysell told the board the accusations that were made about former Treasurer Pamela Smith, implying there was embezzlement and fraud, were found to be unsubstantiated. Hysell said those accusing her,

"mainly Laurie Clark who happens to be still a town trustee as well as Anne Howe ... and Coopman and Bornstein ... who stood behind that without any evidence." Hysell said no one has apologized to those who lost their jobs.

The meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

The Monument Board of Trustees usually meets at 6:30 p.m. on the first and third Mondays of each month at Monument Town Hall, 645 Beacon Lite Road. The next regular meeting is scheduled for April 5. Call 719-884-8014 or see www.townofmonument.org for information. To see upcoming agendas and complete board packets for BOT or to download audio recordings of past meetings, see <http://monumenttown-co.minutesondemand.com> and click on Board of Trustees.

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

Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, March 11 and 25

Parking strategy takes shape; water debate continues

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans
The Palmer Lake Board of Trustees (PLBOT) met three times in March. On March 11, the first of two regular meetings was held. On March 25, the board held both a workshop meeting and the second regular meeting.

The workshop addressed two parking issues that the previous board had debated several times: parking on city streets and parking at the reservoir trailhead. At the regular board meeting following the workshop, Mayor Bill Bass set a direction on street parking and the board voted to acquire a parking kiosk machine to manage parking at the reservoir trailhead. Water issues were addressed with the board awarding a contract to redrill one of the town's wells, discussing how to manage the water level in Palmer Lake, and amending the ordinance that governs stormwater requirements.

The board heard two presentations from guest speakers: the first on the status of the I-25 South Gap Project and the second on the role of the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce. Five resolutions were passed, and two public hearings were scheduled. The board heard a proposal to create a wildlife conservation zone as an Eagle Scout project. Finally, the board heard operational reports from staff.

Parking to be allowed on some streets

At the March 25 workshop, Public Works Supervisor Jason Dosch provided the staff's recommendations for where to allow and where to forbid street parking, based on an effort Dosch, Chief of Police Jason Vanderpool, and Fire Chief Kevin McCarthy made to inspect all streets. Dosch said it was easiest to list the streets where parking would be allowed since there were fewer than streets where parking would not be allowed.

Dosch used South Valley Road as a dividing line and listed these streets where parking would be allowed in the north half of the town:

- South Valley Road
- Lower and Middle Glenway Streets



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- Glenway Street (only at Palmer Lake Elementary School playground)
- Upper Glenway between Dixie Street and High Street (adjacent to Palmer Lake Elementary School)
- Columbine Road from Pie Corner to Page Street

• Oakdale Drive
In the south half of the town, Dosch listed these streets where parking would be allowed:

- Suncrest Road, Durango Way, and Platte Lane
- Second Street
- Third Street
- Wheatridge Street
- Douglas Avenue and Forest View area
- Vale Street area
- Westward Lane
- Meadow Lane
- Circle Road

Parking would not be allowed on all other streets, Dosch said. He stressed his list was preliminary and said the restaurants' need for parking had been a factor in his recommendation.

Town Administrator Dawn Collins suggested the parking recommendation be posted on the town's website to solicit feedback. She also pointed out town staff had been given direction to develop the first parking lot adjacent to Highway 105, which would provide 50 additional parking spots for restaurant patrons.

Trustee Nicole Currier asked that a map documenting proposed street parking be created.

At the board meeting following the workshop, Bass said he wanted to implement the staff recommendations. He asked for public feedback, and for a map to be developed and posted on the town's website.

Parking kiosks to debut at reservoir trailhead

At the March 25 workshop, Parks Commission Chair Reid Wiecks summed up for the board the research done on parking kiosks by the commission. The commission chose a kiosk made by T2 Systems that takes credit and debit cards only, is solar powered and uses a Wi-Fi connection. The kiosk chosen is cheaper and more secure than kiosks that also take cash, Wiecks said. The Parks Commission recommended putting the kiosk in the north parking lot close to the trailhead.

Wiecks said the commission suggested a fee of either \$5 or \$10 for the day and believed the parking revenues could total about \$30,000 annually with the fee set at \$5. He suggested the revenue raised could be spent on an employee who would maintain the reservoir trail, the trailhead and Glen Park. Wiecks mentioned that the parking lot by the playground in Glen Park might be a suitable location for a second kiosk.

At the board meeting following the workshop, Trustee Karen Stuth raised the issue of charging residents \$5 to park and visitors \$10. A resident pointed out that a higher fee for visitors made the town seem unwelcoming to visitors who provide revenue to the town in other ways.

Trustee Jamie Farr argued that Manitou Springs charges residents the same fee that visitors pay.

The board voted unanimously to purchase the recommended kiosk and set the fee later.

Re-drill of town well approved

The board voted unanimously to re-drill Well D-2R, which pumps from the Denver aquifer. The Palmer Lake Water Department (PLWD) requested bids and selected Hydro Resources Rocky Mountain Inc. to do the work at a price of \$477,470, which includes drilling, construction, and testing the well. The

project should be complete 70 days after the agreement is signed.

Low water level in lake a concern

Collins told the board that the Parks Commission had recommended cancelling activities at the lake because of its low water level. She said there were safety issues caused by the lack of water, citing the possibility children might get stuck in the mud or be injured by fishhooks. Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) would not stock the lake with fish in its current state, she said. She asked for Bass, water consultant Dave Frisch and Certified Water Supervisor Steve Orcutt to discuss the issue with town staff.

Collins said the town had rights to 64 acre-feet of water for the lake, but that the reservoirs could not supply that amount. She also said the maximum rate at which the town could divert water to the lake was eight acre-feet a month.

Kirk Noll, vice chair of the Parks Commission, said it was a painful decision for him but he recommended cancelling activities on the lake for the remainder of 2021. Noll said a representative of CPW had inspected the lake and was concerned about stocking the lake with fish. Another inspection would be done two or three weeks before the planned stock date, and if it looked bad, CPW would not stock the lake.

Bass suggested a meeting with staff to discuss this issue in the next few days.

Storm water ordinance amended

At the March 11 meeting, the board voted unanimously in favor of Ordinance 3-2021, which amends sections 16 and 17 of the town's Municipal Code to align with the most recent changes to the stormwater quality measure and access templates in El Paso County's Engineering Criteria Manual.

Gap project on budget and on schedule

CDOT Project Director Paul Neiman gave the board an update on the status of the I-25 South Gap Project, which is in the third year of its expected four-year duration. The northern portion of the work is substantially complete, Neiman said, adding it was easier than

the southern portion because no bridges needed to be rebuilt in the northern portion. The express lane has not yet been implemented, he said.

The portion of the project adjacent to Greenland is more complex, according to Neiman, since it contains four bridges and is close to the railroad. The entire project contains nine bridges—five existing bridges that will be rebuilt and four that will be newly constructed.

Neiman emphasized the scope of the project, which includes many basic construction tasks such as paving, constructing walls and medians, managing drainage, and upgrading and building bridges. The paving aspect will require 822,000 tons of asphalt, Neiman said. The project is expected to cost \$419 million.

The project includes four wildlife crossings intended to allow deer and elk to cross the freeway safely. Two of the crossings are 60 feet wide and two are 100 feet wide and were placed where collisions with wildlife are most common. Nineteen miles of fencing will be installed to direct wildlife to the crossing points.

Sixty percent of the paving is complete, and the rest will be done between May and October of 2021. Neiman said fiber optics used for camera systems, tracking devices, and other future technologies will be installed.

Neiman concluded with information about work that has started on the County Line Road bridge. Left-turn lanes and 12-foot shoulders will be added to the bridge, as well as a deer guard.

Trustee Glant Havenar asked Neiman if the impacts of closures and detours on Palmer Ridge High School had been considered. Neiman said CDOT was coordinating with many groups including the school district and that access through County Line Road should always be possible. The northbound on- and off-ramps on the east side of I-25 will be shut down for six weeks. There will also be a four-day complete closure of the interchange after the new ramps are built and some overnight closures of the bridge, Neiman said.

There will be more communication from CDOT as the project goes forward, and Neiman invited the community to read additional details via an online open house at <https://bit.ly/25CountyLine>. The link contains a feedback form.

Chamber of Commerce serves community

Terri Hayes, president and CEO of the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce (TLCC), told the board her organization provides three resources to the community: a visitor center, an economic development corporation, and a



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chamber of commerce.

Most people who come to the visitor center are local residents, she said, some of whom have recently moved to the area and seek information about the community. The visitor center gives them information about local businesses. The center also provides meeting spaces for public use such as a conference room, a community room, and the white house just south of the Jarrito Loco restaurant.

In terms of economic development, the TLCC advises local landowners who are planning projects. TLCC maintains lists of renters and sellers. Hayes said her team emphasizes networking in the community, and their main focus is on retaining businesses in the Tri-Lakes area.

The chamber is a membership organization that raises operating funds from member dues and events. They introduce businesspeople to

others who may be interested in working with them, track legislative issues, and testify to the state Legislature on impacts to small business.

The chamber's website has detailed information about all three chamber roles. It can be found at <https://trilakeschamber.com>.

Resolutions passed

The board passed four resolutions:

- Resolution 18-2021, which extends a land use permit for 12 months at the request of Louis Sass, who could not meet the original deadline for using his permit due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- Resolution 19-2021, which authorizes an agreement with Amcobi under which they will take over administration of the town's water billing.
- Resolution 20-2021, which adopts a code of

conduct policy for town employees.

- Resolution 21-2021, which appoints Stephen J. Sletta as the town's municipal relief judge.
- Resolution 22-2021, which adopts a new hire policy.

Public hearings scheduled

The board scheduled two public hearings, both to be held during the board meeting scheduled for April 8:

- Hearing to adopt Pikes Peak Regional Building Department (PPRBD) plumbing code.
- Hearing to adopt PPRBD electrical code.

Eagle Scout project will create conservation zone

Weicks told the board that Jacob Unwin had proposed creating a wildlife conservation zone at the lake as his Eagle Scout project. The zone would be just north of the bridge, on

a small peninsula that has willows and reeds. The project would install posts and lines on the lake side and a split rail fence on the land side to prevent kayakers, canoers, and anglers from disturbing the wildlife on the peninsula. Unwin needs to raise \$2,000 for materials and a posthole digger to complete his project, Wiecks said, and is looking for donations. Anyone wishing to contribute should contact Wiecks by email at ReidWiecks@gmail.com.

Highlights of operational reports

- The town has requested bids to repair South Valley Road; the winning bid will be selected on April 7.
- The town has been given \$200,000 of stimulus funds to upgrade bridges and guardrails and to mediate rust.
- Staff continues to rewrite the town's municipal code, which Collins re-

gards as vital.

- No additional water taps were released in March.
- The library rehabilitation project is waiting on a final timeline.
- The deadline for contractors to bid on the repairs to the Town Hall was extended to give staff time to answer contractors' questions.

The Board of Trustees is scheduled to hold three meetings in April, a regular meeting on April 8 and a workshop and regular meeting on April 22. The workshop will be held at 5 p.m. and the regular meetings at 6 p.m. All meetings will be at Town Hall, 42 Valley Crescent. Meetings are normally held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. Information: 481-2953.

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

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

Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, March 8

Capital projects and water re-use plan move forward

By James Howald

On March 8, the Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) board met to continue its management of the district's capital improvement projects and its work to develop an infrastructure for water re-use. District Manager Jessie Shaffer alerted the board to an issue with easements emerging from the Woodmoor Open Space Committee's plans to expand the lot size of their members after the purchase of land from the Walters family.

Shaffer also asked the board for direction concerning a request for supplemental water from Classic Homes, which is developing land adjacent to Jackson Creek Parkway. Shaffer announced the retirement of WWSD's Office Manager Marsha Howland. Finally, the board heard operational reports.

Capital projects on schedule

Richard Hood and Josh McGibbon of JVA Consulting updated the board on the

progress of the three capital improvements projects the district has underway.

The three projects—upgrades to the South Water Treatment Plant (SWTP) and to the Central Water Treatment Plant (CWTP), and a rebuild of the Lake Pump Station (LPS)—are being managed under a single contract using the Construction Management at Risk (CMAR) project management method. The CMAR method brings contractors into the design phase as early as possible

and commits the company doing the construction, in this case Stanek Constructors, to provide a Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) for the project.

Hood and McGibbon told the board the work on the SWTP would be complete by March 31. They showed the board before and after photos of the new sodium hypochlorite generator and chemical pump system at the site.

The project goals of the work on the LPS are to expand the pumping capacity and add a pipeline to the CWTP while retaining the existing pipeline to the SWTP, Hood said. He showed an exterior view of the pump house, which was designed to suggest a boat house and will be built on a small finger of land that will be built on the west side of Lake Woodmoor. Intrusions alarms are part of the design, Hood said. Board President Brian Bush asked that cameras be added to the design.

the Pikes Peak Regional Water Authority (PPRWA). He said the study would address how PPRWA member districts might receive return flows of water from Fountain Creek in partnership with Colorado Springs Utilities. Details of that meeting can be found at this URL: <https://www.ocn.me/v21n3.htm#wwsd>.

At the March 8 meeting, Shaffer clarified that the PPRWA study was separate from the North Monument Creek Interceptor (NMCI) project, another effort to re-use water. He asked the board to approve a Project Participation Agreement authorizing WWSD to participate in the PPRWA study.

Shaffer told the board that there are six or eight storage sites that could be developed for the project to receive reusable effluent from Fountain Creek and then transmit it to CSU's raw water system. He said the study would develop several plans, select the best three using fatal flaw analysis and other methods and then get cost estimates before selecting the best plan. Shaffer said he thought the water tank adjacent to Highway 83 just North of Flying Horse Club Drive might be the storage facility to which CSU would deliver water.

Shaffer said the current budget had funds allocated for this study, which would require \$10,000 from each participating water district. He asked the board to approve \$15,000 to cover the participation fee and any contingencies.

The board voted unanimously to approve the agreement and the expenditure.

Easement issue arises at Walters property

In 2020, the Woodmoor Open Space Committee (WOSC) participated in an agreement to purchase 94 acres east of

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District 6: Falcon, Cimarron Hills, a portion of Black Forest and surrounding areas (*incumbent Barry R. Springer*)

The "Procedure for Director Elections and Member Voting" is available on MVEA's website at www.mvea.coop/annual-meeting.

To view a territory map with districts, visit www.mvea.coop/territory-map.

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- To be nominated by the nominating committee, please contact the MVEA Board Nomination Information Line at (719) 494-2528. If seeking election by nomination through the nominating committee, a candidate questionnaire must be received by MVEA to be submitted to the committee by 5:30 p.m., Thursday, March 25, 2021.
- To be nominated by petition, you must have the petition signed by 15 MVEA members. Petitions and procedures will be made available by contacting the MVEA Board Nomination Information Line at (719) 494-2528. The petition, along with a completed candidate questionnaire, must be received by MVEA by 5:30 p.m., Monday, April 19, 2021.

A candidate questionnaire must be completed for either nomination by the committee or nomination by petition. If you have questions, please contact the MVEA Board Nomination Information Line.

Nominating Committee

District 1: Steve Burgess • District 4: Ed Kovitz • District 6: Lavern Kauffman

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Lewis-Palmer High School and north of Higby Road, sometimes referred to as the Walters property, with the intent to retain some of the land as open space and use some of the land to enlarge the lots of the residents adjacent to the property. At the same time, Pro-Terra Properties LLC purchased another tract of land from the Walters family for residential development.

The 65 acres kept as open space by WOSC has now been renamed South Woodmoor Preserve.

Shaffer told the board that “a fair amount” of the land used to enlarge residents’ lots contained utility easements required by the district to maintain their infrastructure. New construction by homeowners on the land acquired to enlarge existing lots might block access to easements, Shaffer said, and El Paso County might not identify this problem when approving new construction. Some enlarged lots extend over existing infrastructure, he said. Shaffer asked the board how this issue should be handled.

Board President Brian Bush said Woodmoor covenants prohibit any building on easements, and any change to the covenants would require two-thirds of the residents of Woodmoor to vote in favor of the change. Bush explained the WWSD board was sympathetic to the homeowners and would allow “a modest infringement” on an easement, but structures, fences, plants, and sheds on easements would not be allowed. Gates that connect existing fences might be allowed, he said.

Operation Manager Dan LaFontaine explained that some of the easements contained sewer lines, and in the past WOSC had asked WWSD to fix ruts caused by WWSD trucks that had

served those lines. WWSD had done the requested repairs, he said. The district sometimes uses contractors who might face difficulties accessing the easements, LaFontaine said.

Shaffer said he had concerns about relying on the Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) to manage easements used by WWSD.

Bush suggested that WWSD should consider working with El Paso County to ensure it does not issue any permits to build over existing utility easements. Bush, who is also the president of the WIA board, said he would send a letter to all WOSC members documenting that the WIA covenants prohibit building anything in a utility easement. Shaffer said he would pursue this issue with the county and report back to the board.

Classic Homes requests supplemental water and tap discount

Shaffer said he met with a representative of Classic Homes concerning a high-density single-family residential development planned to be adjacent to Jackson Creek Parkway, which would include detached residences, townhomes and apartments. Shaffer said he explained the district’s policy for supplemental water service, which contains alternative methods for defining supplemental water. Shaffer said he believed Classic Homes would accept the standard method for defining supplemental water.

Shaffer said Classic Homes asked for a discount on the district’s tap fees. Shaffer said he did not think the district was obligated to offer a discount but said doing so might emphasize the water-wise approach Classic Homes was planning to use.

Shaffer explained the district allocates .36 acre-feet a year for a single-family detached residence and .27 acre-feet per year for a townhome, and he expected Classic Homes townhomes to fall somewhere in that range.

Shaffer said Classic Homes asked that they pay the district’s multi-family tap fee for their detached high-density structures, which would reduce their charge for a water tap from \$24,000 to \$18,000.

The consensus of the board was not to offer Classic Homes a discount.

Office Manager Marsha Howland to retire

Shaffer announced the retirement, in April, of Marsha Howland. In her role as office manager, Howland performed a wide range of tasks to assist the district in its mission.

Highlights of operational reports

Operational reports included the following highlights:

- WWSD will begin Woodmoor Ranch operations starting with cleaning the Chilcott Ditch, which will begin delivering water to customers on March 15, weather permitting.
 - Two line breaks and one service failure were reported in the last 30 days.
 - The water level in Lake Woodmoor will be low throughout 2021 until the new LPS is completed.
- *****
- The next meeting is scheduled for April 12 at 1 p.m. Meetings are usually held on the second Monday of each month at 1 p.m. Meetings are currently held at the Woodmoor Barn Community Center rather than the district office; please see www.woodmoorwater.com or call 488-2525 to verify meeting times and locations.
- James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me.*



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Tri-Lakes Wastewater Facility Joint Use Committee, March 9

Cost-sharing method confirmed

By Lisa Hatfield

The Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility (TLWWTF) Joint Use Committee (JUC) met on March 9 and confirmed its one-time exception to a cost-sharing decision made Feb. 9. Facility Manager Bill Burks also informed the JUC that the Monument Public Works Department had told him that the town would not change the way it treats radium in its groundwater in the near future.

TLWWTF is owned in equal one-third shares by Monument Sanitation District (MSD), Palmer Lake Sanitation District (PLSD), and Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD).

The three-member JUC acts as the board of the facility and consists of one director from each of the three owner districts' boards: WWSD board Director and JUC president Lee Hanson, JUC vice president; MSD Treasurer and JUC secretary/treasurer John Howe, and PLSD board member Reid Wiecks. The meeting was held at TLWWTF; most of the JUC members, other district board directors, and other district staff members attended remotely via Zoom.

Joint Use Agreement utilized

The 2010 facility Joint Use of Facilities Agreement (JUFA) specifies that property, equipment, or fixture expenses more than \$5,000 "in total" are defined as "major repair or replacement" capital items and shall be billed by one-third to each district. Costs below \$5,000 should be divided by flow/BOD percentages (about 20% MSD, 20% PLSD, 60% WWSD).

In February, Burks purchased a rotating pump assembly for the return activated sludge pumps for \$4,921, and he billed each district proportionally on March 1 for February TLWWTF expenses, dividing the pump cost by their percentage of flow/BOD. However, Burks found out afterward that with the shipping costs, the total expense would be \$5,070. At the Feb. 9 meeting, the board consensus was to still divide this item expense by flow/BOD, even though now technically speaking it qualified as a major repair or replacement.

In March, the board again revisited its decision. After another discussion, the members agreed to stick with

their decision from February to divide this item's cost by flow/BOD, but in the future there will be no exceptions and they will abide by the JUFA. They also agreed to revisit the \$5,000 cut-off amount at the annual JUC meeting that is attended by every director of the three owner districts and consider making an inflation adjustment to this arbitrary \$5,000 capital cost limit.

Radium not an issue

Background: The JUC has been aware of Monument's efforts to continue to meet its drinking water standard with regard to radium 226/228. See www.ocn.me/v16n9.htm#water, www.ocn.me/v16n12.htm#tlfjuc1108.

TLWWTF's sludge, which is hauled always in trailers to be applied to land as fertilizer as the most affordable and ecologically sound solution, could be potentially affected depending on what treatment method the town decides to use on its water if it can't continue to use dilution.

Burks said he had a meeting with the Town of Monument about what it's planning to do with radium in its drinking water and that, "nothing is going to

change with the way the town is going to treat radium. They are blending three water wells into one filter plant, and then all (TLWWTF) is going to get is a backwash from that filter plant that we are currently getting. The water out of filter will go into a radium removal system, and whatever is removed from that point is going to be hauled off. So, I think we are all finished with this topic as far as Town of Monument. I think we're good."

See related Monument Sanitation District article on page 14 and www.ocn.me/v21n3.htm#msd.

The next meeting is scheduled for 10 a.m. April 13 at the Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility, 16510 Mitchell Ave. Meetings are normally held on the second Tuesday of the month and are open to the public from all three owner-districts. For information on virtual meeting access, call Bill Burks at 719-481-4053.

Lisa Hatfield can be reached at lisahatfield@ocn.me.

Monument Sanitation District, March 17

Preventive maintenance contracts; public access to meeting

By Allison Robenstein and Lisa Hatfield

The Monument Sanitation District (MSD) board March 17 meeting con-

tinued to be difficult for residents to access. The only decision made during the meeting of mostly presentations

was to create preventive maintenance contracts for generators.

The meeting officially began 9:06 a.m. but was quickly recessed until 9:20 a.m. so that Chairman Dan Hamilton could admit several residents onto the call. These residents used the phone number published on the MSD website, but Hamilton had used a different number to begin the meeting. Resident Timothy Enders came to the meeting in person after being blocked from calling in, but Hamilton told him the meeting was not available to the public for in-person access. Later in the meeting, Hamilton called Enders to ask him questions about two projects. The

Google Meets link posted on the website did work this month, but none of the computer cameras was turned on in the meeting room.

Background: Last month, following an executive session, the board consensus was to have both video and sound made available for remote attendees for the March 17 regular board meeting unless the state allows regular attendance by all in person by that date. When asked about this, Hamilton said the board has "zero plans to get a camera." He continued by saying the small district won't be investing in a camera.

MSD (Cont. on 16)

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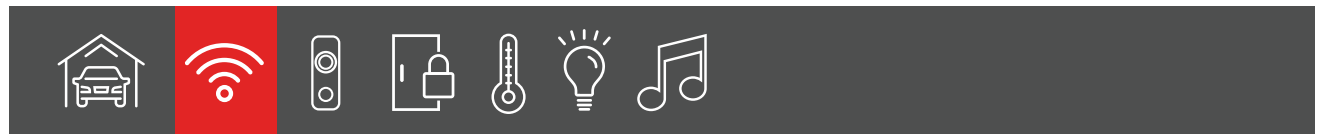
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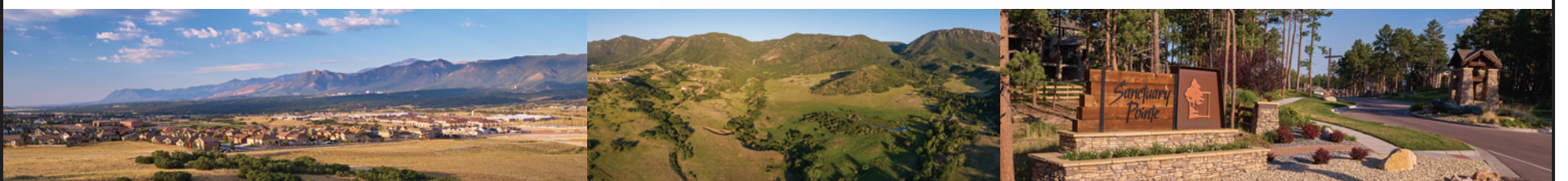


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MSD (Cont. from 14)

Donala suggests preventive maintenance contracts

In the absence of a district manager, MSD has contracted with Donala Water and Sanitation District to provide operator-in-responsible-charge (ORC) services. In his monthly report, Donala Superintendent Mark Parker told the board about issues with lift station backup generators. A bad generator starter was replaced under warranty at the Wagons West station. Parker said all four MSD lift station backup generators should have associated preventive maintenance contracts that will allow Donala to service them every six months. The board voted to pre-approve a contract for the maintenance not to exceed \$3,500 annually.

- Other comments by Parker included:
- Donala needs a key to the MSD office so it can access the supervisory control and data acquisition control and management (SCADA) system if there is an alert after hours.
 - SCADA system field radios were improperly grounded but have been adjusted.
 - The MSD North Monument influent flow measurement flume at the Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility has been down for eight days. Parker says this may be attributed to a Microsoft Windows 10 upgrade at the treatment facility.
 - He requested access to the MSD storage facility to do an inventory of operations documents. Treasurer John Howe said he would provide keys and lock codes.
 - The Red Lion brand metering display needs to

be replaced with a larger one at a cost of roughly \$3,500. No decision was made for the purchase.

- MSD has 113,000 feet or 21 miles of pipe. In today's costs, that equates to \$11 million in pipe assets.
- Monument has four lift stations plus a fifth one being built in Willow Springs. MSD has 533 current taps. When Willow Springs is built out, there will be a total of 1,199 taps.

GMS Inc. Consulting Engineers also provided its monthly engineering report in the board packet, but the board did not discuss it.

Financial matters

Director Laura Kronick noticed the Integrity Bank cash account has over \$400,000 saved and asked, "Why would we have that kind of money sitting in an operating account?" Hamilton said, "That is not my forte, but the number does seem high."

Accounts Administrator Cheran Allsup said only the board and district manager have the authority to move money from one account to the next. Because there is no manager at this time, Allsup had been awaiting the completion of the 2020 audit so that the auditors could give their recommendation. The final phase of the audit is expected to begin in earnest April 30 and will take over a month to complete. Board consensus was to move the money, but those of us on the remote call could not hear the details decided or what direction Allsup was given.

Other system reports

Resident Timothy Enders is adding a second single dwelling unit to each of two properties he owns, both in the district. He's working to connect a new private

sewer service line for each new dwelling unit to the existing service line for each existing home. Hamilton asked why Enders was bringing this to the board's attention. Enders said he needed clarification from GMS Consulting Engineers, but they were not the district manager. Hamilton told Enders someone from GMS would be contacting him to finalize these plans.

Joint Use Committee (JUC) representative Howe heard at the JUC meeting in March that the Town of Monument has decided it is "not doing anything with the radium and put off for a couple of years." In February, MSD was concerned the town would be sending technologically enhanced naturally occurring radioactive materials (TENORM) that require special disposal methods to MSD's collection system and, therefore, Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility as well. See <https://ocn.me/v21n3.htm#msd> and related March 9 JUC article on page 14.

The board went into executive session at 10:28 a.m. for C.R.S. §24-6-402(4)(b) and (f). Upon entering open session, Hamilton told OCN the board took no votes and ended the meeting at 11:15 a.m.

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 April 21 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.

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Donala Water and Sanitation District, March 18

Leak nightmare fosters policy exception

By Jennifer Kaylor

Directors of the Donala Water and Sanitation District board received reports, recommendations, and updates from the district's support staff at the March 18 meeting. District General Manager Jeff Hodge was absent due to unexpected personal leave.

All directors attended the meeting. Online guests included Roger Sams of GMS Inc., Dave Powell, and Brett Gracely of LRE Water.

The March board meeting packet is available on the district's website by accessing https://www.donalawater.org/images/docs/packets/2021/March_2021_Board_Packet.pdf. A list of Donala's 2021 board meeting dates can be found at https://www.donalawater.org/images/docs/notices/2021_Meeting_Schedule.pdf

Board responds to exceptional water loss

The home of a Donala resident who left town during February experienced a burst pipe that resulted in an 18-day leak and gushed more than 183,000 gallons of water into the home. With the customer facing a bill that exceeded \$6,000, Office Manager Tanja Smith presented a leak policy change proposed by Hodge. Current policy calculates the bill by establishing the difference between the same month of the prior year to the leak month, dividing that figure in half, and charging the halved excess to the customer's usual tier rate. See a related March 2020 article at www.ocn.me/v20n3.htm#dwsd.

Hodge proposed charging all of the excess at a tier one rate and maintaining the current two-leak per three-year time stipulation. Smith explained

that the current policy tends to favor residents who experience small leaks but creates an unfair calculation if customers have not lived in their home a full year since the calculation would be based on another customer's use. Under the current policy, the leak being considered would cost \$2,697, but under Hodge's proposed plan the cost would drop to \$1,411.

Smith asked the directors to consider applying Hodge's proposed policy as an exception for this customer as well as amending and approving the policy in the future. Directors unanimously authorized the exception and anticipated approving the amended policy when officially presented by staff.

Donala works with neighboring districts

Donala, Triview Metropolitan District, and Forest Lakes Metropolitan District (FLMD) partner-own the Upper Monument Creek Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility. Donala manages the facility and provides water and wastewater infrastructure management guidance to FLMD. Over the past few months, there have been breaks in FLMD's water pipes. Superintendent of Water Operations Mark Parker reported that he and Hodge had been researching possible reasons for and solutions to the breaks. Parker described the possibility of variances in water pressure causing expansion and contraction of the pipes, which could lead to pipe degradation and thus breakage. One of FLMD's engineers posited that the breaks may be due to pipes sitting on hard pan, which is compacted, impenetrable soil or rock. Another consideration is that the pipe, which was likely manufactured between 2006 and 2008 by a manufacturer that faced lawsuits in its history, may have been made with sub-standard materials.

Donala staff planned to attend a March 25 meeting with FLMD to explore solutions to the pipe problem as well as other topics.

Monument Sanitation District (MSD) also receives operational and Operator in Responsible Charge (ORC) licensing support from Donala. The six-month intergovernmental agreement became effective Dec. 1, 2020 and has the potential to be extended for an additional six months See <https://www.ocn.me/v21n1.htm#msd> for more information. Parker reported that he attended MSD's March 17 board meeting in which directors approved a general contractor for preventive maintenance of the district's generators. Donala also received means to more reliable access to MSD's supervisory control and data acquisition system. There was no discussion of whether MSD would opt to extend the ORC intergovernmental agreement with Donala.

ID theft strikes district personnel

Identification defrauders seeking to illegally obtain unemployment insurance stole information per-

taining to five Donala employees. Smith presented information about purchasing identification theft protection for all employees and board directors, a move initiated by Hodge. After conducting research, Smith recommended enlisting the services of Identity Guard at an approximate annual expense of \$8,000. Directors supported the purchase.

Finances switched to new institution

District accountant Christina Hawker discussed a resolution to adopt the banking services of Chase Bank. Explaining that the bank employs a small department that specializes in services to government accounts, including water and sanitation districts, provides direct access to its representatives, and has balance and fee requirements commensurate to her expectations, Hawker requested board approval of the resolution. President Ed Houle read the official resolution and directors approved it unanimously.

Additional updates

- Hawker's report on the district's finances confirmed that all revenues and expenses aligned with budgetary boundaries.
- Sams expected bids for the meter replacement project to go into circulation within a few days.
- Houle confirmed that the U.S. Air Force Academy's Visitor Center wastewater system would not be channeled through Donala's wastewater treatment plant. As of Donala's February meeting, the potential project still held some possibility.
- Parker reported that precipitation continues to be forecast at below-average levels heading into summer. The recent snowstorm did raise Colorado's statewide snow water equivalent from 85% to 92%. See <https://www.drought.gov/states/colorado> for U.S. drought monitor conditions for Colorado.
- In a written report, Chief Waste Plant Operator Michael Boyett confirmed that all laboratory analysis fell well within parameters, and performance of the sequence batch reaction continued to improve as weather improved. Boyett applauded Waste Plant Maintenance Technician Trevor Wilch's outstanding work during the recent snowstorm.
- Parker announced Water Operator Ross Robinson's achievement of earning his B water certification, his third certificate in an estimated six-month timespan. Smith reported that Water Operator Joe Lopez had earned his A water certification. Parker described the operators and their professional advancements as assets for the district.
- Drawings for the 2021 water main replacement project had been finalized and were await-

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ing approval from El Paso County after which Donala could publish a request for proposals.

- Directors scheduled a full-day tour and orientation for April 2.

At 2:20 p.m., directors adjourned.

The next meeting is scheduled as a workshop and will begin at 9 a.m. on April 15. 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 to receive up-to-date meeting information. The district

office is located at 15850 Holbein Drive, Colorado Springs. See <https://www.donalawater.org> for more information about the district.

Jennifer Kaylor may be reached at jenniferkaylor@ocn.me.

Triview Metropolitan District, March 18

Warmer weather gives rise to project activity

By Jennifer Kaylor

District staff updated the Triview Metropolitan District Board of Directors on their respective areas of expertise at the March 18 meeting. Vice President Marco Fiorito led the meeting in President Mark Melville's absence. Palmer Lake Board Trustees Sam Padgett and Nicole Currier, exploring ideas and information about water delivery and resources, attended the online meeting as guests.

The March 18 agenda and board meeting packet may be accessed via https://triviewmetro.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Agenda_2021-03-18_final.pdf and https://triviewmetro.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/BoardPacket_2021-03-18.pdf, respectively.

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

2021 projects gain momentum

Several project updates comprised District Manager Jim McGrady's report, including a somewhat dormant project to install a water pipeline from the intersection of Higby Road and Jackson Creek Parkway (JCP), under I-25, and to the northern section of the Conexus development which lies west of I-25. The 16-inch pipe's capacity should serve not only the additional portion of Conexus customers but neighboring districts that may choose to partner with Triview—such as Monument and Palmer Lake for emergency needs or as part of another Triview project called the Northern Delivery System—as well as other potential developments. Once the Colorado Department of Transportation approves the plan to bore under the highway, McGrady anticipated a start date around March 29 and a completion time frame of about two months.

In response to directors' questions, McGrady explained that the "upsized" diameter from the original plan of 12-inch pipe to 16-inch pipe would match estimated daily continuous flows of 1,500 gallons per minute (GPM), as well as catastrophic fire flow needs of up to 4,000 GPM. He added that the cost differential between the two sizes was slight since the larger size would help overcome elevation gains and maintain adequate water pressure. Describing his understanding of proposed development for the west side of I-25, McGrady affirmed the plan to install pipe with a larger diameter.

Switching to the topic of the Northern Delivery System, McGrady outlined the system's water tank location and its impact on surrounding trails and vegetation. Semi-buried and with a maximum 10-foot above-ground height, the tank would be placed on the south side of Baptist Road across from Sanctuary Pointe with a pipeline connection coming from the southern end of Fox Run Regional Park. The position received a thumbs-up from El Paso County Parks personnel despite the need to divert one trail to the south.

The trail in question runs along a ridge and is subject to erosion, so the district's proposed redirection of the trail is ultimately beneficial. The tank site, protected by a perimeter of security fencing and a gated access road plus vegetation enhancements to camouflage its surroundings, will be maintained by Triview. McGrady expected to receive geographic information systems (GIS) renderings of the site for public review in the next few weeks.

Addressing the recently completed well house-restroom facility in Sanctuary Pointe, McGrady reported that options for restroom maintenance and hours of operation were being considered. He forecasted that the area would build in popularity over the next year as the park reaches completion. Parks and Open Space Superintendent Matt Rayno confirmed that the restrooms were equipped to be open year-round, and the magnetic locks could be programmed for varying times to accommodate seasonal changes and special events. He discussed preliminary plans to add sur-

veillance equipment for the restrooms and park.

McGrady reported on the 2021 overlay project bid response. This project completes the mill and overlay work of Leather Chaps from Bear Creek Elementary School (BCES) to JCP. Martin Marietta rose to the top with a bid of \$357,291. The two remaining bids were submitted by Kiewit and Schmidt, both of which proposed project costs over \$400,000. Marietta's bid fell about \$80,000 below the district's projected budget expense. Directors authorized McGrady to award the project to Martin Marietta and sign any and all necessary documents.

Public Works crews face off against snow

As of the board meeting, the Triview community had received about 115 inches of snow during the 2020-21 snow season, reported Rayno. Consecutive snowfalls consumed most of the Public Works' time and energy throughout February and March. Commenting on the March 14-15 storm, Rayno praised his crews for their outstanding work and many long hours. Closing JCP for a few hours early Monday morning provided much needed time and opportunity for plows to stay ahead of the accumulation, he said. Snow crews employed the use of a borrowed front-end loader that allowed them to deposit snow in otherwise inaccessible areas. Cars and other vehicles parked on the street, however, remained a significant source of frustration and potential damage—to both district equipment and residents' automobiles. See winter streets standards https://triviewmetro.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/WinterStreetStandards_v2.pdf

McGrady characterized the storm's impact on district personnel as worse than the March 2019 bomb cyclone. Reserving hotel rooms for snow crews and arranging for on-call tow truck service were strategies the district employed as part of the action plan created from the previous blizzard.

- Additional reports and actions**
- The district's new website was live as of March 23.
 - McGrady confirmed that district accountant Cathy Fromm corrected a 2021 budget line item error that gave the appearance of overspending on the A-yard building project.
 - Two public hearings were conducted for resolutions 2021-02 and 2021-03 for adopting a budget, imposing a mill levy, and appropriating funds for Triview subdistricts A and B, respectively. Both resolutions reflected zero dollar amounts in the budgets and mill levies. The board approved the resolutions to satisfy state budget regulatory expectations.
 - In response to Water Superintendent Shawn Sexton's report, McGrady confirmed that unmet water in newly constructed homes might be a significant contributor to the district's volume pumped vs. volume sold disparity.
 - Triview's Parks and Open Space staff and Town of Monument staff collaborated to remove the concrete culverts in the native area west of BCES. Rayno affirmed the teamwork of all involved and expressed appreciation that the eyesore had been removed.
 - Progress on the South Reservoir Complex continued despite weather challenges, so the April 26 estimated completion date remained intact. Next steps included installing Rubicon gates needed to divert water off of the Excelsior Ditch and ditch cleaning and maintenance. McGrady established a goal of May 1 for the ditch to receive water flows.
 - The Pueblo Reservoir Excess Capacity Agreement continued to move along. Two of four chapters of the environmental assessment were ready for submission to the Colorado Bureau of Reclamation. McGrady expected to have a contract in place by July 15.

At 6:57 p.m., the board entered executive session §24-6-402(4)(a)(b) and (e) acquisitions, legal advice, and negotiations regarding the following general topics: negotiations associated with water delivery infrastructure; negotiations associated with water storage

on the Arkansas River and its tributaries; negotiations with potential contractors and miners concerning the Stonewall Springs Reservoir Complex; and negotiations regarding acquisition of renewable water resources. OCN later confirmed that the board did not make reportable decisions following the executive session.

Triview board meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month at 5:30 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for April 22. The district office is located at 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302. Check the district's website, <https://triviewmetro.com/>, or call 488-6868 for meeting updates and to confirm if the meeting will be in person or online/teleconference. See also "Triview Metropolitan District" on Facebook or Twitter.com/@TriviewMetro.

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Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, Feb. 18, March 9 and 16

Payroll discrepancies rectified; ISO rating improves

By Allison Robenstein

The Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) held two special meetings and one regular meeting Feb. 18 and March 9 and 16. A Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) audit showed payroll issues, the district achieved an improved Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating, and the search for an interim fire chief continued.

FLSA audit shows payroll inconsistencies

The board held a special meeting and executive session on Feb. 18 in accordance with C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4)(b) to receive advice of legal counsel. During the executive session, the board reviewed an FLSA audit of Wescott's 2020 payroll records. The audit was conducted because of irregularities found in payroll procedures. In open meeting, the board directed Administrative

Assistant Stacey Popovich and Legal Counsel Michelle Ferguson to proceed with another audit of 2019 payroll records and to communicate to all employees that the board intends to take actions to pay any discrepancies found.

In the regular March 16 meeting, Ferguson said the results of both audits show seven employees are owed money ranging from \$45 to \$4,000 in underpayments. Popovich provided those employees a lump sum reimbursement in their next payroll cycle.

Chief's report

Battalion Chief Scott Ridings said the ISO review is complete and Wescott achieved a two rating. The Fire Suppression Rating Schedule used by ISO determines how capable a fire department is in putting out a fire. A one rating is the best, while a 10 means a department doesn't meet minimum

requirements. Ridings said insurance companies use the ratings to set home insurance rates. A rating of two means the district is efficient in putting out fires for areas where hydrants exist and hauling water to portions of the district without hydrants as well. Ridings said of the 556 fire departments in Colorado only nine are rated a one and 61 are rated a two. "This is something to be proud of," said Ridings.

Chief Vinny Burns began the process of improving the district's ISO rating shortly after the mill levy passed in 2017. See www.ocn.me/v17n12.htm#dwfpd.

Other items of interest in the chief's report include:

- The department had 72 calls for service in February 2020 and, for the same month this year, there were 84 calls. There was no significant fire loss within the district.

- During the major snowstorm, DWFPD worked as part of the Northern Unified Command, which includes the Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District, Town of Monument, Monument Police Department, Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District, Falcon Fire Protection District, and Palmer Lake Fire Department. Battalion Chief Shannon Balvanz prepared the district for the event, while Battalion Chief Sean Pearson manned the command center. As expected, most of the calls were traffic accidents and stranded motorists, although a stroke victim had to be brought out with the aid of Wescott's Humvee and town snowplows in order to transfer the victim to an ambulance. Chairman Mark Gunderman thanked everyone who worked during the storm.

Interim chief interview proceeds

During the Feb. 18 meeting the board decided to interview two retired fire chiefs to serve as potential interim chiefs. One unidentified person took their name out of the running. The remaining candidate, Warren Jones, will be interviewed by the board. Gunderman said Jones is well credentialed and Gunderman feels comfortable moving forward with just the one candidate, but Director Joyce Hartung said, "I would like to get a couple of others just for comparison." This was overlooked by the rest of the board who arranged for Jones to meet staff. Firefighters were enthusiastic at the chance to meet their possible new chief.

Gunderman and Secretary Larry Schwarz were appointed to the personnel committee. The first order of business for the newly formed group will be to facilitate hiring of the interim fire chief.

The meeting adjourned at 4:57 p.m.

The next Donald Wescott fire district meeting is scheduled for April 20 at 4 p.m. If the meeting is held in person, it will be at Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Dr. For a virtual meeting, the phone number is 669-900-9128, and the meeting code is 980 378 2073. Meetings are usually on the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. For information, call Executive Administrator Stacey Popovich at 719-488-8680 or see www.wescottfire.org.

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Black Forest Fire Rescue/Protection District, March 23

Fire code variance concern; fleet modifications needed

By Natalie Barszcz

The Black Forest Fire Rescue/Protection District (BFFRPD) board met both in person at Station 1 and via Zoom meeting on March 23. Vice Chairman Nate Dowden attended via Zoom. The regularly scheduled meeting for March 17 was rescheduled to observe the CO-

BFFRPD (Cont. on 20)

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BFFRPD (Cont. from 18)

VID-19 quarantine protocols. The board discussed fire code variances for new construction, modifications to existing apparatus and an engine purchase, and the collaborative response during the March 13-14 snowstorm.

Fire code variance concern

Fire Chief PJ Langmaid asked for guidance from the board for the ability to grant fire code variances to several small commercial properties that are already under construction in the district and said the following:

- Commercial properties continue to be disapproved under the fire codes and through BFFRPD's formal agreement with the City of Colorado Springs.
- A lack of water and access issues are the two stumbling blocks that small commercial properties face and although access is easier to work around, the water supply is an expensive, cumbersome issue for the smaller commercial structures in the \$500,000 range.
- The community needs to know that consideration is being given to variance requests.
- Not every structure would require a variance, for example: a variance would not be needed if a large hotel were proposed in the north of the district.

Langmaid said the minimum requirement according to the Fire Code for commercial buildings is a flow of 1,750 gallons per minute for a two-hour duration. This translates to 210,000 gallons of water on site for even the smallest of commercial structures. Also, BFFRPD only has one pump capable of drafting 1,500 gallons per minute. For buildings to meet this aspect of the code, two pumps would be required to draft from two separate cisterns and those cisterns would need to be within 500 feet of the building to allow for a fire attack.

Treasurer Jack Hinton said he would be very hesitant to approve any variance for a commercial property. Should anything bad happen, the district may be liable. A financial burden on the applicant is not an excuse for granting a variance, said Hinton.

Chairman Rick Nearhoof said he is sure variances would place a liability on the district.

Dowden asked about alternative water provisions for small commercial properties, such as tanks and sprinkler systems. "I am not an advocate for granting variances," said Dowden.

Langmaid said he would ask the district attorney about liability issues and explore the possibility of alternative solutions with the Colorado Springs fire marshal. Deputy Chief James Rebitski will ask neighboring districts if they are granting variances.

2019 custom engine causing problems

Langmaid said the warranty issues on the 2019 Spartan (which he referred to as a Frankenstein engine) have been fixed by SVI, however, the following issues need to be addressed:

- The 2019 SVI/Spartan Engine issues stem from the pump engagement modular, the pump and roll design, and the 4-by-4 capability in conjunction with the specific design requested by BFFRPD.
- The crews have tested the pump engagement five times a day and sometimes it engages within 10 seconds and other times it goes beyond two minutes, and this has become a consistent problem.
- The hybrid design configuration incorporating a Type 1/Type 3 engine does not exist on any other SVI manufactured apparatus.
- SVI has stated during communication that they have never manufactured this configuration before and never will.
- A meeting with the SVI president will be scheduled to discuss the issues and come up with a reasonable solution.

Hinton said that regardless of the district's design request to manufacture and produce a two-in-one engine with 4-by-4 capability, the SVI/Spartan engineers should not have rubber stamped its production knowing the design flaw and SVI should fix or buy back the engine.

Director Dave Hoffpauir said let's see how far the chief gets; maybe SVI

will fix the problem.

Langmaid requested the board consider bringing the fleet into a standardized alignment and said the following:

- The fleet replacement plan originally requested two identical engines and a tender, but now that request is reduced to one engine and a tender. See www.ocn.me/n20v9.htm#bffrpd.
- The Spartan will need to be kept in service for a few more years since the district cannot sell the engine with the existing flaw and it would not be possible to re-coup the capital already invested.
- Removing the four-wheel drive would reduce the hose bed and allow a gain of 8 inches to better access the ladder.
- The 2019 SVI/Spartan engine is taller than regular height and several staff have incurred minor injuries removing the ladder, and that has resulted in worker compensation expenses.

Nearhoof said that in the past he had fallen off a Colorado Springs Fire Department (CSFD) engine three times trying to access the ladder and although the engine was not identical to the Spartan, CSFD did successfully lower that engine.

Langmaid said the board should consider an intergovernmental purchase agreement with the City of Columbia, S.C., to purchase a Pierce Manufacturing Inc. Type 1 Engine with the correct specifications for about \$620,000.

The board directed the chief contact Pierce Manufacturing and return to the board with more detail.

Snowstorm collaborative response by North Group

Langmaid said the following:

- Through collaboration with Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, Donald Wescott Fire Protection District and Palmer Lake Fire Department, the North Group was able to respond to stranded motorists without the assistance of Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management (OEM).
- Some OEM requests (not specified) were not met.
- Both of the four-wheel drive, Type 1 and Type 3 Engines slid off the road and required towing back onto the road.
- The after-action report will be provided at the April board meeting.

Hinton thanked the crews for housing over 70 stranded motorists during the storm between both stations. **Note:** This was even more than sheltered in the stations during the 2019 bomb cyclone. See www.ocn.me/v19n4.htm#bffrpd.

"The staff showed great discipline and a sense of duty during the storm—they crushed it," said Langmaid.

Financial report

Hinton gave the following financial update:

- As of Feb. 28, the district has \$806,842, of which \$176,000 is in the checking account and about \$135,000 is in savings, and the remainder is in the reserve account.
- All checks appeared appropriate, and the district spent 10% of the budget in February less than the budgeted 16.33%. The temporary discrepancy is due to the February bills scheduled for payment on March 1.
- In March, the chief transferred \$35,364 into the Reserve Fund account, \$35,364 into the Capital Improvement account, and \$13,263 needed for the TABOR account. All monies were deposited

as budgeted.

- A total of about \$1.2 million in revenue was deposited in March. The March property tax revenues are arriving as expected.

Hinton said the district has changed from a cash accounting method to the Government Accrual Accounting Method and he is not a fan, because the funds are shown in the account but not immediately available in the checking account.

The board accepted the financial report as presented, 5-0.

Chief's report

Langmaid said the following:

- Now that the district has begun to receive property tax revenue, the district will start to prioritize purchases. See www.bffire.org for 2021 approved budget "summary."
- While maintaining an apolitical position, the new administration at the federal level has brought with it significant increases in all operating costs to include fuel, utilities, and supplies, and spending may need to be adjusted throughout the year.
- The district has hired an administrative officer who is transitioning out of the Army, and he will begin full time in June. Note: Administrative Assistant Melissa Bottorff left in December after 17 years.
- The district received 94 applicants for the open entry-level firefighter positions and 19 have been selected for the interview process.
- The district saved about \$500 by using an inhouse mechanic for repairs on the Rosenbauer Type 1 Engine.
- The live-fire training evaluation report is nearing completion with Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District.
- The 2020 Annual Report is now available on the district website. See <http://www.bffire.org>.

Cell tower lease

Nearhoof said he had informed Richard Painter that the cell tower site would remain exactly as it is currently configured and just as the residents agreed upon when they purchased their properties, in accordance with the 99-year lease agreement. See www.ocn.me/n21v1.htm#bffrpd.

Board Secretary Donna Arkowski said the matter had been settled legally and the past attorney letter confirms the agreement.

Hinton recommended the board make a motion to send a letter to Painter confirming the "matter is closed."

The board approved the motion, 5-0.

Attorney choice

Langmaid said the last inclusion of property inadvertently identified that BFFRPD has two attorneys representing the district. In the past, Lief Garrison of Gould, Whitley & Garrison had been the designated attorney for processing inclusions of property. At the end of December, the Colorado Springs City Council sent legal documents to Garrison, but he did nothing with the documents. The district had, however, been expecting Linda Glesne of Collins, Cockrel & Cole to receive the documents but Garrison was the attorney listed with the city to receive inclusion documents. Having two legal counsels presents a legal ethical issue for both attorneys, said Langmaid.

Hinton without hesitation made a motion to select Glesne as the sole district counsel for BFFRPD.

The board accepted the decision, 5-0.

Inclusion of property

Nearhoof asked the board to adopt

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APRIL 10 10AM - 3PM



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BLACKSMITH DEMONSTRATIONS ~ GEOLOGY FUN







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Resolution 2021-04 for inclusion of property at 16910 Thompson Road, Colorado Springs CO, 80908.

The board approved the inclusion of property, 5-0.

Traffic concerns

Nearhoof said the chief had received a letter from Donna Porter thanking the first responders and staff at BFFRPD for responding to the scene on Dec. 30 when she was in a vehicle collision at Vollmer/Burgess Road. Thankfully,

there were no injuries and everyone on scene displayed efficiency, kindness and caring, which meant a lot at a confusing and stressful time, she wrote.

“There is a thankful person, sounds like the crews did a great job,” said Nearhoof.

Hinton said speeding at the Vollmer/Shoup Road intersection is still a problem and the cause of deadly accidents, with three wrecks so far this year.

Langmaid said there is some en-

ergy within the community to address that intersection, as the traffic flows increase from Colorado Springs and motorists pursue different routes out of the city.

Nearhoof said he would re-address the installation of lights at that intersection with the county commissioners.

“Thank you” BFFRPD

Nearhoof read a card from Scout Troop 70 thanking Rebitski for “working with them and allowing the boys to have a

fire and some fun!”

The board meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

Meetings are usually held at 7 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month at BFFRPD Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for April 21 at 7 p.m. For updates and minutes, visit www.bffire.org.

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

Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, March 24

Chief impressed by collaboration during storm

By Natalie Barszcz

The Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) board met on March 24 in person at Station 1 and via Zoom to discuss the winter storm response, the Station 1 remodel progress, and succession planning.

Winter storm collaboration

Fire Chief Andy Kovacs said he was impressed with all of the TLMFPD staff and the partner agencies that had collaborated on Sunday, March 14 during a storm that severely taxed the region. The unified command post at the Town of Monument (TOM) included the TOM Public Works Department, Monument Police Department (MPD), Palmer Lake Fire Department (PLFD), Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD), Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, and Falcon Fire Protection District (FFPD). Before the storm, TLMFPD hosted a conference call for about 10 regional partner agencies to make sure all resources would be collaborating during the storm.

Kovacs said TLMFPD documented 57 responses, of which 51 were stranded motorists and six were routine medical calls. Throughout the region, partner agencies documented and responded collectively to 81 stranded motorists. The numbers were likely higher as other crews assisted many more stranded motorists across the region as crews were dispatched to calls. When the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) closed I-25, Highway 105 and Highway 83, BFFRPD housed 57 stranded motorists at Station 1 and 19 at Station 2.

However, Kovacs said he was disappointed that the Emergency Coordination Center (ECC) closed before the worst of the storm arrived. When the roads closed the ECC closed and the Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management should have made the ECC available throughout the storm, the first to open and the last to close to support incidents in the region, he said. Requests for tows and snowplows were met, but the collaborative recommendation for the future will be to close the ECC after the storm has ended.

Note: The ECC is a core resource that supports disaster response operations in the region.

Deputy Chief Randy Trost said that in the past and during the March 2019 Bomb Cyclone, the county would close I-25 at Baptist Road, creating a burden for the Monument community. Significant strides have been made to make the turn-around closure point Interquest Parkway, an area that can provide far more resources and greater disbursement for stranded motorists in a place often experiencing less severe weather conditions than Monument. “Attending the I-25 Emergency Services Working Group meetings has paid dividends for the Tri-Lakes area during the storm,” said Trost.

Trost said the El Paso County Search and Rescue track crews kept

three units in Northern El Paso County throughout the storm to help track and rescue stranded motorists.

Kovacs said he never had to rescue anyone with a Snowcat in his previous position in California and he is glad TLMFPD has that apparatus. He suggested the board consider replacing the current Snowcat with a newer model. See www.ocn.me/v19n4.htm#tlmfpd and www.ocn.me/v19n5.htm#tlmfpd.

“Kudos” to all the staff and the supporting agencies that assisted during the storm, said Kovacs.

Battalion Chief Mike Keough and Trost were on duty during the storm and will provide an after-action report at the April meeting.

Station 1 remodel

President John Hildebrandt said an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between Palmer Lake Sanitation District (PLSD) and TLMFPD for a temporary tap and service required board approval. PLSD would provide sewer service for a trailer accommodation to be utilized by crews during the remodel of Station 1.

Division Chief of Logistics Dean Wahl said the trailer will be 14 by 60 feet with three bedrooms, a kitchen, two bathrooms, and two showers, with laundry services and electric heating. The trailer will be connected to PLSD for sewer services. It will be located on the west side of Station 1 and will also be connected for water and electricity. The trailer is scheduled for delivery on April 15, and it will take about 10 days to be fully connected to utility services.

Hildebrandt said that PLSD will not assess a tap fee for the connection to the temporary accommodation.

The board accepted the IGA for the temporary tap service, 7-0.

Wahl announced the Station 1 remodel groundbreaking is scheduled to take place on May 2.

Succession planning

Kovacs said all staff members have completed a survey to help plan for succession. The following results were revealed:

- Most employees expect to remain at TLMFPD for the next 11 years.
- One battalion chief is planning to retire in three years.
- Some division chief positions are expected to be available in about five years.
- Over 40% of the staff expect to remain in the fire service for 20 years.
- It is anticipated that some staff may move to other organizations.

Some internal staff members are interested in moving into leadership roles, and four indicated they would like to be fire chief in the future. During the March snowstorm, two battalion chiefs were given the opportunity to participate in the command center and interact with all agencies to gain experience at the executive level. The district will be planning for succession over the next several years for internal staff to

move into leadership positions.

Fire hydrant location review

Kovacs said that he, Trost, and Division Chief of Community Risk Jamey Bumgarner met with the county Sheriff’s Office dispatch center as one of two departments within the county to beta-test hydrant data software. The review will ensure all district hydrants are correctly reflected in the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) map.

Chief’s report

Kovacs said the following:

- TLMFPD made an emergency disaster declaration for COVID-19 in March 2020 and he will be discussing the decision to rescind the declaration with partner agencies and report back to the board next month before making a decision.
- The Emergency Services International (ESCI) 2019 master plan is transitioning into a five-year plan. The goal is to have the plan com-

pleted by the end of the year and begin implementing the plan in January 2022.

- Some policies and procedures that have existed mostly in draft form are now being formalized and published.
- Target Solutions—An online operations management system/file-sharing application for the fire service is now being used to provide photo and video sharing across the organization, giving everyone the opportunity to learn from each incident across all shifts.
- A new local monthly meeting of fire chiefs to include the Colorado Springs Fire Department and the Air Force Academy Fire Department will ensure everyone is supporting each other and resolving regional issues.
- TLMFPD will meet monthly with

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- the MPD command staff to make sure both agencies are working in harmony for the betterment of the community.
- Trost and Division Chief of Training Jonathan Bradley met with BFFRPD’s Fire Chief PJ Langmaid on March 24 to finalize some minor language changes in the live-fire incident report. The report will be released within days.
 - The West Metro Fire Academy students will graduate on May 7.

Financial report

- Treasurer Jason Buckingham read the financial report and said the following:
- The district received \$189,011 in property taxes of the projected \$10 million.
 - Overall revenues were below normal and will be until the bulk of the property taxes are received.
 - Overall expenses were below average for January and February and 2% under the projected budget.
- Buckingham said 18 electronic transactions were reviewed, and all appeared appropriate and within the budget. The following larger payments were:
- \$17,871 for Safeware (technical rescue equip-

- ment).
- \$35,278 for F250 lighting packages.
 - \$56,684 for Fire Station 1 remodel.
 - \$15,878 for property taxes on the business office purchase.
- The board accepted the financial report as presented, 7-0. Kovacs said he and Bumgarner are discussing the collection of impact fees with area builders for all construction outside of the city limits.
- Director of Administration Jennifer Martin said the impact fees are paid directly to TLMFPD for new properties within Monument.
- Note:** Impact fees are collected within the Town of Monument for both residential and commercial construction but are not currently collected in the unincorporated areas of Northern El Paso County.
- Ready, Set, Go! Wildland Fire Prevention/Mitigation Day—May 15**
- Bumgarner said that the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) has provided a contract assistant based in Oregon to help create media programs to garner public support for the Wildland Fire Prevention/Mitigation Day on May 15 outside at Lewis-Palmer Elementary School. The event is a collab-

orative event to include: Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church Emergency Preparedness Group; Dave Root, Colorado State Forester, the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control, and the county Sheriff’s Office Wildland Crew. The event is exciting for the district and it will put the district on the IAFC’s radar, said Bumgarner, who hopes citizens will visit the site to see the “before and after” of wildfire risk reduction work on the school grounds. See details in Calendar on page 31.

The meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday of each month. The next regular meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. April 28 at TLMFPD Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. Staff and the public are encouraged to attend the meeting via Zoom to comply with social distancing. Zoom meeting: 886-8850-7523 Password: 187219. For upcoming agendas and minutes, visit www.tlmfire.org/board or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

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

Lewis-Palmer District 38 Board of Education, March15

Board approves contracts for two principals, discusses return to in-person learning, testing



Above: At the D38 board meeting March 15, Dr. Adam Frank (left) was approved as principal of Palmer Ridge High School and Davonne Johnson (right) was approved as principal of Lewis-Palmer Elementary School. Both begin work Aug. 1. *Photos courtesy of D38.*

By Harriet Halbig

The March 15 regular meeting of the Board of Education was held via Zoom due to a snowstorm and school closure.

New principals confirmed

The board approved contracts for two new principals, to start on Aug. 1.

Davonne Johnson was approved as principal of Lewis-Palmer Elementary School. Johnson has been with the district for many years, beginning as a teacher at Prairie Winds Elementary and continuing through various school and district-wide positions.

Superintendent K.C. Somers said there were many qualified applicants for the position and that Johnson impressed the panel with her breadth of knowledge and experience.

Johnson said that she has been touched by the amount of support she has received through calls, email, and letters.

Dr. Adam Frank was approved as the new principal for Palmer Ridge High School. Coming from Ohio, he is known for celebrating each student. He was a social studies teacher, an ice hockey coach, assistant principal, and athletic director at his former school. Somers said that his prioritizing of students impressed the panel.

Frank thanked Somers and the panel and was impressed at the rigor of the process. He said that he has relatives in the Denver area and looks forward to the process of finding a house and settling in.

Board members congratulated both individuals and welcomed them, offering any assistance they might need.

Return to in-person learning

In his superintendent update, Somers reported on the success of returning to in-person learning four days a week at the secondary level.

He said that it felt like a reunion when students were once again all together in school. There continue to be some quarantines, and the district will retain its Flex Fridays to allow for students to receive any additional support they may need.

Somers stressed that there may still be a need to shift things, as such issues as crowding during lunch hour may pose a challenge, but students seem eager to do what they can to remain in person. Students will continue to be encouraged to eat outside when weather permits.

Standardized testing decisions

In her legislative update early in the meeting, board Secretary Tiffiney Upchurch said the Legislature has applied for a waiver from some of the Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) testing. The state is applying for application of about 50 percent of the usual number of tests.

Tests that will be administered if their proposal is approved are English Language Arts in grades 3, 5, and 7 and math in grades 4, 6, and 8. Science tests will be waived.

Somers said the SAT test will be given to 11th grade in the week of April 12 and the PSAT will be given to grades 11 and 12. AP testing will be given in person starting on May 3.

Somers stressed that the district is ready to test to the extent required. He said that he is mindful that some parents will opt out of their students’ participation and pointed out that results of the testing will not be used for the evaluation of teachers.

Board Vice President Theresa Phillips asked if financial aid is available to those who take the AP tests. Chief Academic Officer Lori Benton responded that

those who require aid should contact their counselor. Funds are available for this purpose.

Testing update

According to the *Denver Post* on March 27, the U.S. Department of Education approved most of Colorado’s plans to amend testing this year. As stated earlier in this article, English Language Arts and Math will be administered, but federal officials did not approve skipping science tests.

The science tests will be administered to eighth-graders, but not to fifth- and 11th-graders.

A waiver request is being prepared and is expected to be submitted in April.

Consent agenda discussion

Upchurch asked for an explanation of the Alternative Cooperative Education (ACE) program, which was proposed for approval.

Benton responded that eight teachers are qualified to teach these classes, which are part of a national program. The classes, geared to high school and Transition students (those who are on an Individual Education Plan and continue to attend school until age 21), cover such subjects as life skills, individual financial literacy, job searching, computer skills, and career planning. These classes appear on student transcripts and do not involve a fee. Eligibility is determined by counselors.

Benton also commented on the grant for Gifted Education. This is an annual grant to districts with personnel qualified for screening individuals for identifying gifted traits. The district has a higher-than-average ratio of students in the gifted category.

The board passed the consent agenda.

The Board of Education of Lewis-Palmer District 38 meets on the third Monday of the month at the district’s learning center, 146 Jefferson St., Monument. Due to COVID restrictions, seating is limited. Meetings are livestreamed on the district website, lewis-palmer.org. Individuals who wish to submit a public comment may do so online in advance of the meeting.

Harriet Halbig can be contacted at harriethalbig@ocn.me.

Monument Academy School Board, March 11

Board hears from Concurrent Enrollment consultant, prepares for assessments

By Jackie Burhans

The Monument Academy (MA) School Board held its regular board meeting on March 11 and heard from a consultant on concurrent enrollment, prepared for assessments, learned about the state of the athletic programs, and updated board policies.

Concurrent Enrollment

Rob Wilkinson, who oversees Concurrent Enrollment

(CE) at Banning Lewis Preparatory Academy (BLPA), a D49 charter high school in Colorado Springs, shared his parent information night presentation with the MA board. Chief Operating Officer Christianna Herrera noted that MA was able to use its Colorado Charter Schools Program grant to consult with experts for program development. She said MA will work extensively with Wilkinson as they formulate their program

and identify a counselor.

He explained that the BLPA CE program started three years ago with six kids and will have 100 next year. He said the main purpose for the program is to prepare students so they are ready for the rigor and expectations of college. Kids can start with one course and then add more. He has 17 students who take a full college load in their senior year and don’t step foot on

his campus. The school still gets Career and Technical Education credit while seats are opened up at BLPA. Some students may finish high school with an associate degree and kids get a chance to explore different interests as well as self-advocate and be responsible.

If the student gets a C grade or higher, BLPA covers the tuition; if the class is at the high school, BLPA covers the textbooks. It's cheaper to do on the high school campus than if the students go to the community college. BLPA offers four courses on its campus using either visiting professors or its own staff. CE gets students both high school and college credit. A college semester is counted as a full year of high school credit, and the GPA is weighted on a 5.0 scale.

BLPA also supports the ASCENT 12+1 program, which extends CE for a fifth year. To do this, the qualifying student does not receive their diploma after four years and must declare a degree plan and be selected by the principal or counselor. The student would receive their diploma after their fifth year.

BLPA also offers a career start program through Pikes Peak Community College to allow students to explore fire science, health careers, design, welding, zookeeping, cybersecurity, etc. This program is for students who are not on a college pathway but want trade skills and certificates to enable them to go straight into the job force.

Wilkinson discussed how to tell if CE is a good fit for a student. Students can take the College Board ACCUPLACER test, use their PSAT or SAT scores, or take an EdReady test as many times as they need. Wilkinson also serves as their counselor, advising them each to review interests, confirm career or college pathway, select courses, etc.

Preparing for assessments

MA Secondary School Assistant Vice Principal Marty Venticinqe, who also serves as director of assessments, reported on his efforts to schedule assessments. He noted that a bill (HB21-1161) was working its way through the Legislature to lighten the load on the Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) tests. The bill, which was later passed by the Legislature, signed into law on March 16 by Gov. Jared Polis, and conditionally approved on March 26 by the U.S. Department of Education (USED), alternates which grades take which assessments.

Under the plan approved by the USED, schools

and districts will be required to administer the CMAS assessments in English language arts to all students in third, fifth, and seventh grades. CMAS math assessments must be administered to all students in fourth, sixth, and eighth grades. The USED did not approve Colorado's request to suspend all science tests this year, so schools and districts must administer science tests to students in eighth grade. CMAS science will not be given to students in fifth and 11th grades, as they normally would, but CDE must publicly report the SAT Analysis in Science subscore this year. Social studies tests, which are required only in state law, will not be given this year.

Venticinqe said that window for taking the tests has been extended and there is a provision for parents to opt in for subject area assessments for which they are not scheduled. He expects the CMAS tests to take place in April and the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) tests to take place in May. No remote testing is allowed. Parents can opt out of state tests via an online form with a new option to specify if COVID-19 concerns are a reason for doing so.

Athletics

Venticinqe also reported that athletics and extracurriculars are under way. Boys basketball made it to the championship this year but lost to the team they had beaten last year. Girls basketball won their first two games then was hit with a quarantine and are hoping to reschedule. He said the Matchwits team was about to start competition, girls volleyball team members were doing volunteer workouts, then track and field would start followed by girls soccer.

He also noted that there was an oral agreement to have cross country and track and field next year at the high school. He is also looking into to golf as an option. Board members suggested he survey eighth-graders who have committed to continuing to ninth grade to gauge their interest.

Board policies

The MA board considered and approved several board policy updates:

- 1515 - Teacher Representative to the board—wording changes of “may” to “should” and “will” to “shall.”
- 1516 - Personal and Property Search Policy
- 1517 - Internet Use Policy—minor changes as requested.

- 1525 - State Assessment Refusal Policy—updated in anticipation of coming assessments.
 - 1526 - State Assessment Administrative Policy
- MA board policies can be found at <http://bit.ly/ma-bd-policies>.

Highlights

The following items were highlighted at the board meeting:

- Elementary School Principal Charlie Richardson reported that all staff had completed diversity training with MA's lawyer, Brad Miller.
- Herrera reported that the League of Charter Schools held its virtual conference. Board member Misty McCuen attended and provided a briefing on the training she received.
- Herrera said that Matt Dunston had procured a new bus for the school, which will be used to shuttle students between campuses and to help transport students to athletic events.
- A large quarantine at both campuses in the previous week caused frustration for parents and administrators. MA submitted a letter to state and county health organizations asking for regulators to engage with schools to help alleviate the burden.
- Miller confirmed that the governor's mandates have the effect of law that public health has quarantine authority. He said that MA doesn't have the latitude not to follow the guidelines and that the county can close schools.
- The board unanimously recognized Marc Brocklehurst and promoted him to the newly created chief financial officer position.
- The board agreed to continue holding its meetings solely by Zoom for the final two meetings of the year.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, April 8 at 6 p.m. The MA School Board usually meets at 6 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. Meetings may be held in-person and/or via Zoom, which will be streamed to the MA YouTube channel. For more information on how to join the meeting in person or virtually or to submit a public comment, see <https://bit.ly/ma-boe>.

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

Northern El Paso County Home Owners Association, March 13

Library district CEO gives overview

By Marlene Brown

NEPCO (Northern El Paso County Home Owners Association) again used Zoom for its bi-monthly meeting March 13. As NEPCO moves into its 20th year in existence, it continues to promote high quality of life for 49 homeowner association members in the northern end of El Paso County. The area reaches from Douglas County Line Road east to Meridian Road, south to Shoup Road, and west to the Teller County boundary west of Monument and Palmer Lake.

The two county commissioners for the area are:

- District 1—Holly Williams's area includes most of the NEPCO Focus Area.
- District 3—Stan VanderWerf's area includes parts of Monument and Palmer Lake and all the way down the Front Range to Cheyenne Mountain. Most of VanderWerf's area is mountainous and has special needs for transportation, including snow removal and maintenance.

The school districts for the Focus Area are Lewis-Palmer District 38 for the northern two-thirds of the area and Academy District 20 for one-third of the area. The Focus Area communities for House District 20 Rep. Terri Carver and House District 19 Rep. Tim Geitner include Black Forest, Gleneagle, Monument, and Woodmoor. All of NEPCO's focus area is in Sen-

ate District 9 and is represented by Paul Lundeen.

Paul Pirog, vice chairman of the Transportation Land Use Committee, reported that 16 commercial and residential projects have been approved since the first of the year by the El Paso County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). Eight projects are now in the review process through the county Planning Commission and BOCC. Twenty-one new projects are headed for review; many are in NEPCO review now. It has been expressed to the PC and BOCC to be sure to take into consideration the comments made by NEPCO when it comes time to approve projects that are in their system. After a long search, John Lewis of Timberview 2 has been announced as the new chairman of the Transportation Land Use Committee.

Guest speaker

Guest speaker John Spears, chief librarian and CEO of the Pikes Peak Library District, reported on the district. With over 700,000 residents in El Paso County and a budget of over \$35 million, Pikes Peak Library District (PPLD) is one of the largest and oldest library districts in the country. The first library established in El Paso County opened in 1885. Monument Hill branch opened in 1975.

Responding to COVID-19 and continuing to

serve the surrounding communities, PPLD went virtual. They continued Adult Education, Food Industry Training, and Creative Services. They use their 3D printers for making face shields and their commercial sewing machines to make medical-grade facemasks. PPLD has an extensive community outreach in the Tri-Lakes area and El Paso County, also working with Pueblo County and other rural branches to provide ongoing education. For more information contact ppld.org

NEPCO urges signing petition to commissioners

The county is considering a recommendation to extend Furrow Road south to Higby Road, which will increase traffic volume immensely. Studies show the number could increase from 900 vehicles/day to 5,000 by the year 2040. The NEPCO HOAs bordering Furrow Road have formed El Paso Safe Streets Alliance to work with county commissioners and provide public support and information. Please urge the county commissioners to expand traffic calming countywide by signing the El Paso Safe Streets petition at <https://ceds.org/epssa/>

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

Woodmoor Improvement Association, March 24

Updates on developments including the Walters property

By Jackie Burhans

The Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) met on March 24 to hear about upcoming developments and review finances. Board members Connie Brown, Brad Gleason, and Tom Smith were absent.

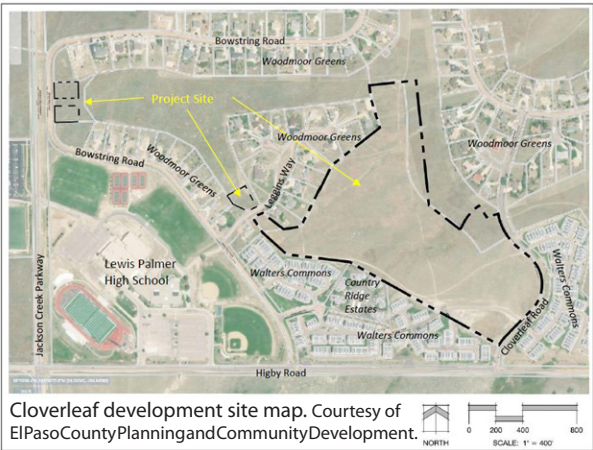
Development updates

President Brian Bush reported on several development initiatives that affect Woodmoor. He said the board is aware of community concerns over the Fur-

row Road extension from Highway 105 to Higby Road. He said several homeowners associations (HOAs) south of Highway 105 are trying to engage with the county to install traffic calming devices. This group is asking HOAs north of Highway 105 to join in that effort. Bush asked the board to consider sending information to residents along with a potential petition to the county.

The El Paso Planning Commission (EPCPC)

recommended approval of the rezoning of ProTerra Properties LLC's Cloverleaf development. See the EPCPC article on page 1. This new development will involve 141 homes east of Lewis-Palmer High School and Woodmoor Park, between the townhomes, on about 38 acres of the former Walters property. It has been approved for rezoning from RS-20000 to RS-5000 square feet. Homes are expected to cost between \$400,000 and \$600,000. This development will be un-



der the jurisdiction of WIA but will form its own Title 32 metropolitan district to impose taxes on owners to pay for infrastructure improvements such as sidewalks, sewers, water, and roads.

The remaining 94 acres of the Walters property was purchased by the Woodmoor Open Space Committee (WOSC), which is surveying its investors to see if they want to donate 65 acres known as the “South Woodmoor Preserve” to WIA for it to manage and provide minor improvements. The donation is conditional on acceptance by WIA and could happen as early as the end of June.

For more information on the Cloverleaf develop-

ment, go to the El Paso County Electronic Development Application Review Program (EDARP) website at <https://epcdevplanreview.com/Public/ActiveList/> and click on the GO button to “See all applications being reviewed now” then search for “Cloverleaf.” EDARP contains information on the initial filling, the preliminary plans, the metro district, and rezoning. See the article on the Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSA) on page 12 for concerns about utility easements on the property retained by WOSC to enlarge the lots of adjacent homeowners.

Finance

Bush reported that WIA revenue is good with increases in rentals at The Barn, new construction fees are strong, and expenses are being held down. Requests for weddings, receptions, and graduations are picking up despite a maximum capacity of 50.

Letters will be sent at the beginning of May to the 179 residents with unpaid dues. Some are long-term debts; around 4% or 110 are due for the 2021 year.

Board highlights

- Woodmoor Public Safety (WPS) Chief Kevin Nielsen said officers would be checking lots for trailers, boats, and RVs which must be stowed in an enclosed building or off-site except for no more than 20 overnights up to 72 hours for loading or repairs.
- WIA will create a large map of the area it serves

to include street addresses and to replace the Woodmoor Water and Safety map it has been using for years.

- Administrator Denise Cagliari said WIA would be reaching out in April for more participation in the Woodmoor Drive fire mitigation grant.
- Board member Per Suhr recommended the board approve a new Architectural Control Committee (ACC) member, which it did. He reported the last ACC meeting disallowed a request by a homeowner to use spray-painted blue river rocks in their landscaping by a vote of 4-3.
- In February there were 17 confirmed covenant violations and 12 HOA checks with multiple violations, most resolved without the need for a formal violation notice.

The WIA Board of Directors usually meets at 7 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month in The Barn at 1691 Woodmoor Drive, Monument. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 28.

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

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

March Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

After what had been a generally uneventful and dry winter season, March made up a lot of ground. The month saw well above normal snowfall and precipitation overall, ranking in the top five snowiest and wettest months of March on record for much of the Front Range. This was helped significantly by the heavy wet snow during the middle of the month. The active weather pattern along with significant snowfall also helped to keep temperatures below normal for the month overall, but we did get a few mild days that provided the feel of spring.

Clear and quiet conditions started the month, with temperatures starting in the 40s on the 1st, then mid- and upper 50s on the 2nd and 3rd. Changes were coming for the 4th, however, as a fast-moving but powerful storm was approaching the region from the southwest. The first effects of this storm were felt during the mid-morning hours of the 4th as clouds increased and snow began to fall around 11 a.m. Snow quickly picked up in intensity and was accompanied by strong winds through the remainder of the day. In the evening, snow fell at the rate of 1-2 inches per hour at times and made for some difficult driving conditions. Accumulations ranged from 6-12 inches during the 12-hour period with a little more than a half inch of liquid equivalent. This was just what we needed to get the month going.

Quiet and dry conditions returned behind this departing storm with highs reaching the upper 40s on the 5th, then mid-50s to low 60s from the 6th through the 9th. These mild conditions and stronger March sunshine helped to melt most of the snow. During this time, signs of a major storm potentially affecting our region began to show up on many of the long-range numerical weather models, but there was a lot of uncertainty about the exact track of the impending storm.

Initial forecasts showed the storm bringing 2-4 feet of snow to our region, then subsequent models took the main snowfall farther north. As we got closer to the event, most of the models zeroed in on a track that would produce the heaviest snowfall from the Palmer Divide through southern Wyoming. But as is typical with forecast models that are trained to normal conditions, they had a hard time with this event because of the extreme amount of moisture associated with it. The overall system configuration was very similar to the March 2003 record snowfall event.

As the storm developed and began to affect the region, the first signs were low clouds, fog, freezing drizzle, and flurries as winds turned easterly, producing upslope and cool conditions. A brief band of snow developed during the early hours of the 10th, producing a dusting to just over an inch of snowfall, not much in terms of amounts, but winds were very strong that morning, creating extremely hazardous driving conditions. The upslope patterns continued to develop over the next couple of days, drawing in more moisture and setting the stage for the main system that was slowly heading our way through the Four Corners region.



Above: The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and Colorado State Patrol urged the public to stay off the highways and interstates as conditions throughout Colorado continued to worsen with the arrival of the snowstorm on March 13-14. Motorists were encouraged not to seek alternate routes to circumvent road closures, but rather stay put or turn back and find a safe place to wait out the storm, because the alternate routes were also impassable. Sections of I-25, I-70, U.S. 24, CO 83, CO 105, and dozens of other major roads were closed during the storm. Here, a CDOT snow blower throws snow over the guardrail on I-25 Monument Hill at 8 a.m. on March 14, between Denver and Colorado Springs. This is a heavy piece of equipment that is rarely used on this section of interstate. *Photo courtesy of CDOT.*

The main storm began to affect the region during the morning of the 13th, with heavy snow falling just after 10 a.m. and continuing off and on through the rest of that day. There were even a few claps of thunder associated with the storm that evening, providing evidence of just how energetic the storm was. This isn't totally unusual for March and April snowstorms, as the stronger sunshine can produce additional instability in the atmosphere and heavier snowfall rates. As the storm continued to move into southeastern Colorado, the pressure gradient tightened up, pulled in more moisture from the east, and kicked up the winds. This created blizzard conditions for several hours from the early afternoon through evening on the 14th. Snow continued to accumulate this entire time as well, with 1-2 feet of new snow falling on the 14th.

The storm began to wind down quickly during the early morning of the 15th as it pulled away from the region. But by the time it was all done, 18-30 inches of new snow had fallen, with 1-2 inches of much-needed liquid equivalent. This storm fell short of the March 2003 event but wasn't too far behind in terms of snowfall. Cold and unsettled conditions stuck around behind the storm as another quick-moving system dropped in on the 17th. This one moved a little too far south to bring much snow for us, but it did keep temperatures below normal for another day.

Dry conditions then returned from the 18th through the 20th, with high temperatures again moving from the mid-40s to the low 60s during the period. But Mother Nature wasn't done with us yet. Another unsettled pattern took hold starting on the 21st

and continued through the 26th. This time a series of storms moving through the West, each dropping some snow and bringing below normal temperatures. The first system moved through from the afternoon of the 21st through the morning of the 22nd. This storm brought another 6-10 inches of snowfall and more much-needed moisture.

After a break of less than 24 hours, the next storm brought another 2-4 inches of snow from the late afternoon of the 23rd through the morning of the 24th. Then a break in the snowfall moved in from the morning of the 24th through the morning of the 25th as the last of the storms in the pattern brought several rounds of snow showers on the 25th, generally producing about an inch of new snow.

The month ended with several days of dry weather, interrupted by a strong but quick-moving cold front. High temperatures were in the low 40s on the 27th, then jumped into the upper 50s on the 28th and well into the 60s on the 29th. Winds were gusty as well, helping to warm the temperatures and melt the leftover snowpack.

But just when you thought we might get a reprieve from winter, a strong cold front blasted through just before midnight on the 29th. This brought a sharp drop in temperatures from the 60s to the 20s and a couple inches of wind-blown snow through the morning of the 30th. Fortunately, this was another quick-moving storm, with plenty of sunshine returning by the afternoon of the 30th and mild temperatures returning for the 31st.

A look ahead

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

March 2021 Weather Statistics

Average High	45.0° (-7.2°)
100-year return frequency value max	57.9° min 38.0°
Average Low	21.5° (+0.3°)
100-year return frequency value max	27.0° min 12.0°
Highest Temperature	65° on the 29th
Lowest Temperature	11° on the 18th
Monthly Precipitation	3.95"
	(+2.36", 62% above normal)
100-year return frequency value max	4.29" min 0.22"
Monthly Snowfall	53.1"
	(+31.9", 62% above normal)
Season to Date Snow	109.7"
	(+18.8", 18% above normal)
	(the snow season is from July 1 to June 30)
Season to Date Precip.	6.76"
	(+0.42", 7% above normal)
	(the precip season is from Oct 1 to Sept 30)
Heating Degree Days	983 (+70)
Cooling Degree Days	0

Bill Kappel is a meteorologist and Tri-Lakes resident. He can be reached at billkappel@ocn.me.

Letters to Our Community

Guidelines for letters are on page 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. The letters this month are arranged in alphabetical order based on the letter-writer's last name.

Show my dead body

If I die in a mass shooting, show a photo of me lying on the ground. Hair splayed on the concrete, store floor, or theater carpet. Legs crossed in an unimaginable position. Me, crumpled, like a rag doll, lifeless, where there once was a lively, dynamic, smiling woman.
Show my purse spilled out, with my lipstick on the ground. My keys in my hand. My shopping list in

my cart. Maybe that will resonate. Maybe some woman will have that same lipstick, and think, she's like me. I have that lipstick. I too was on my way to the store. I too made a shopping list. I too needed bread and milk.
So, please show my dead body, you have my full permission to do so.
Why?
Because maybe, just maybe, seeing people who have been slaughtered will have some kind of impact that hasn't commanded change thus far.
Maybe seeing my blood, my brains, my crumpled body will be the change we need. Right now, after a shooting, we may see a body, far away, with a blurred-out face. But we don't see how they were mowed

down, what is left of them, how they departed this world—those 20 6-and 7-year-olds, those theatergoers, those high school students, we don't see them dead.
If we show the carnage, the blood, the guts, and the out-and-out horrendous scene, maybe it will resonate. Maybe we can start to have common-sense gun laws and affordable and attainable mental health services. Because we need both. One is not more important than the other. Sensible gun laws are not a slippery slope. Mental health does not answer all. Both are needed.
So, show my picture. Maybe it can start a change.
Name withheld upon request
■

Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

Timeless treasures

By the staff at
Covered Treasures
"If you would tell me the heart of
a man, tell me not what he reads,
but what he re-reads."
—Francois Mauriac

For us, these are timeless, meaningful books to read, re-read, and share with generations. We'd love to hear about some of yours!



The Bookworm
by Carl Spitzweg

Tommie's favorites include:
To Kill a Mockingbird
By Harper Lee (Harper Perennial)
\$15.99

Harper Lee's Pulitzer Prize-winning masterwork is one of the most cherished stories of all time. A gripping tale of the Deep South through the eyes of a young girl as her father, a crusading local lawyer, risks everything to defend a black man unjustly accused of a terrible crime. Tommie loves the multiple stories and lessons of this book, summed up by the wisdom of Atticus, the father: "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view. ... Until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it."

The Poisonwood Bible
By Barbara Kingsolver (Harper Perennial) \$18.99
Kingsolver's national bestseller paints an intimate portrait of a crisis-ridden family amid the larger backdrop of an African nation in chaos. Tommie particularly appreciates Barbara Kingsolver's use of language in this book; her use of tone, word choices, and literary devices, to bring the characters and the Congo to life.

The BFG
By Roald Dahl (Puffin Books) \$7.99
The Big Friendly Giant is one of Roald Dahl's most lovable characters. Whether galloping off with Sophie; speaking his delightful, jumbled, squib-fangled patois; or whizzpopping for the queen, he leaves an indelible impression of bigheartedness. The blending of silliness with a moral message is what makes this one of Tommie's favorite children's books.

Paula's favorites include:
East of Eden
By John Steinbeck (Penguin Books) \$18
This masterpiece of Steinbeck's later years is a work in which he created his most mesmerizing characters and explored his most enduring themes. Paula enjoys how Steinbeck brings together the human heart and the land—isolation, loneliness, and even failure. Characters are real and relatable as they embrace life with compassion, humility, and spirit.

Little House in the Big Woods
By Laura Ingalls Wilder (Harper Collins) \$8.99
Anything by Laura Ingalls Wilder is wonderful, but her Little House on the Prairie Series has stood the test of time and tells the story of Laura's real childhood as an American pioneer. Paula notes that these stories teach children about a simple, rustic life, friendship, beauty, quiet moments, and a strong work ethic.

Misty of Chincoteague
By Marguerite Henry (Aladdin Paperbacks) \$7.99
This Newbery Honor Book is set on an island off the coasts of Virginia and Maryland where a band of wild ponies has lived for centuries. It focuses on a mare, Phantom, and her colt, Misty. Paula enjoys Marguerite Henry's books because they have historical authenticity and are suspenseful stories about real horses; visiting Chincoteague is on her bucket list.

Pam's favorites include:
The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe
By C.S. Lewis (HarperCollins) \$8.99
This is the second book in the classic fantasy series *The Chronicles of Narnia* that has been drawing readers of all ages for over 60 years. Four adventurous siblings step through a wardrobe door and into the land of Narnia. Pam discovered the series as a child and has re-read it many times. Full of great adventure, mythical beasts, and talking animals, this series transports the reader to a land where magic meets reality and good conquers evil.

The Phantom Tollbooth
By Norton Juster (Yearling Classic) \$8.99
For Milo, everything's a bore until a tollbooth mysteriously appears in his room. Somewhere along the way, Milo realizes life is exciting beyond his wildest dreams! Pam's favorite things are the wordplay, puns, paradoxes, and problem-solving adventures. She says it's just as much for adults as kids with its encouraging deeper messages. One of her favorite quotes is, "So many things are possible just as long as you don't know they're impossible."

The Splendid and the Vile: A Saga of Churchill, Family, and Defiance During the Blitz
By Erik Larson (Crown Publishing) \$32
Erik Larson brings history to life once again, this time in an intimate portrait of Churchill: his strengths and weaknesses, triumph over tragedy, and his leadership during London's darkest year. Pam is a fan of Erik Larson not only because of his thorough research, but for his talent of writing nonfiction that reads like novels.
Until next month, happy reading.
Tommie, Paula, and Pam can be contacted at books@ocn.me.

April Library Events

Library offers printing of tax forms, other services

By Harriet Halbig
State and federal tax forms are available on the library website, ppld.org, under Tax Time. You can print them at home or come into the library and we will do it for you. With the name of the correct form and your library card, you can get 10 pages printed free each day.
Patrons continue to be invited into the library to browse the collection and stay a brief time to read newspapers or charge devices.

The meeting rooms remain closed and all in-person programs cancelled until further notice, but story times and toddler times are available online. A new program for each is offered each week, and previous programs are still available.
Masks continue to be required for all patrons ages 3 and up, and social distancing is required as well.
Curbside service for claiming holds and inter-library loans will be available indefinitely. Call 488-2370 before you come and your items will be ready

when you arrive, or come by and ring the doorbell on the shelf by the door and we will come to you.
Current hours at the Monument Library are 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. The library is closed on Sundays.
We hope to see you soon at the library.
Harriet Halbig can be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me.

High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

Garden friends and foes and deleting voles

By Janet Sellers
Last year, I goofed with my garden plot. Thinking dill helps keep a lot of bugs away and moisture in the soil, I let fallen dill seeds grow in raised beds to protect it from bugs, rabbits and deer. But my crops didn't like the dill and didn't thrive, so I'm back to careful planning: rotation to confuse returning pests and companions to improve harvests. Companion plantings can assist soil chemistry, attract good bugs, repel bad

bugs, provide ground cover for moisture, and more.
Lettuce likes everybody, no enemies there. Onions are friends with kale, tomatoes, and peppers (the kale enemies), but hate beans and peas. Surprisingly, nightshade relatives (tomatoes, peppers) dislike potatoes, but beans are friends. A planting chart definitely eases planning.
Nature's garden helpers
Our bugs aren't out yet, but they're getting ready. We

can stop them in their tracks with trap crops and other clever gardening tricks. Trap crops are plants that attract the bad bugs before they find our good stuff. Beautiful trap crops include nasturtium, alyssum, and mint. Other tricks include moving the crops around so last year's bugs can't find this year's new plantings and companion planting.
Wasps and garden bad guys
Poisons are the worst bad guys, killing birds, wildlife

and harming kids and pets, ruining our watershed and more. Safe ways to handle what we think of as pests include deterring wasps with fake nests or traps from our homes, but remember, they have important jobs to do in nature!

Eco services of wasps

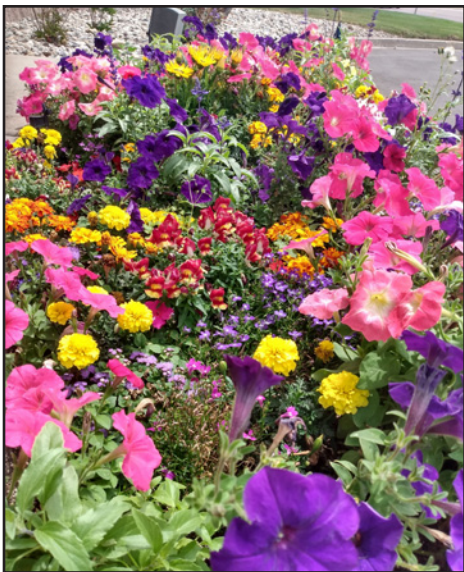
The U.S. Forest Service reports how wasps are helpful, stating that the true wasps have stingers that they use to capture insects or spiders for food for their larvae. We can keep them at a safe distance—200 feet all around the house—with nest decoys or brown paper bags. Hornets and paper wasps provide vital pest control services. Paper wasps feed their growing young

caterpillars and leaf beetle larvae, while hornets catch all manner of live insects for their developing larvae. Yellow jackets scavenge dead insects to feed their offspring, meaning they prevent the bodies from piling up—like a cleaning service.

Janet Sellers is an avid researcher and home gardener, sharing high altitude tips for better natural living in the Colorado Rockies. She can be contacted at janetsellers@ocn.me.

Right: Alyssum, marigold, spearmint or nasturtium, lavender, catmint, garlic or chives deter bugs, rabbits and deer. Castor oil penetrates the ground, giving ground vegetation an odor and taste

that disagree with voles, driving them to find food elsewhere. Mix 1 cup of castor oil with 2 tablespoons of liquid soap per gallon of water and spray it monthly over the lawn and soil and into their tunnels, and again after each big rain or snow. Or position castor oil-soaked cotton balls or other absorbent material (some add tabasco sauce and mint) around tunnels and the garden. For a dry lawn scatter, mix 6 ounces castor oil, three tablespoons each cayenne and garlic powders, and one gallon clay cat litter. For a spray, use a gallon of water, 6 ounces castor oil, three tablespoons each cayenne and garlic powders. *Photo courtesy of Tara Lloyd and Janet Sellers.*



Art Matters

Zoom videos, art, and lighting



By Janet Sellers

Collectors these days may end up collecting a wide variety of artworks or they may enjoy consistency in their collecting. Beyond decoration and furnishings, art has a significant influence on us because it is around us and influences our environment indoors. Like music, art has an impact on us both emotionally and physiologically. As visual beings, we are constantly aware of what's around us. Luckily, we can change, balance, and improve our environment at will with art.

Art lovers and collectors often consider art as like a companion of sorts. We are influenced by the things around us, particularly visual expressive sources, especially art. People have a need for their home, office or wherever they are using the art to silently help evoke

a feeling or mood. We are keenly aware that what we see affects how we feel about our experiences. Lighting, color, and our surroundings impact us in subtle yet powerful ways.

Zoom meetings vs. portrait art lighting for impact

Being aware of the effect of composition and lighting is vital for success with videography, just as it is with art. If the lighting, color, and dynamics aren't properly understood and portrayed, viewers could simply lose interest and not connect to the visuals, both in artwork and in other visual communications such as movies and now with Zoom meetings.

In our small-screen video meetings, we are sitting in one place, and that visual experience takes on a specific set of engagements and responses.

We are basically captive at the screen, looking forward at the onscreen speaker or screen sharing views, and often feel rather exposed to the audience. Knowing how to look our best on screen helps our confidence, comfort level, and focus.

Understanding lighting and backgrounds for online video meeting experiences for both presenters and audiences is vital, just as it is for artworks. In classical paintings, the background is dark and the face well-lit, focusing our attention on the subject as brightly as possible. However, successful video meetings use light backgrounds, focusing small-screen attention to the speaker as subject. Human visual attention needs constant help for focusing attention if we want to get the desired results for a presentation, product

launch or other purpose. The speaker actually creates a talking portrait for the audience, just on an intimate, small screen.

Optimal for painting, photography and movies is the three-fourths view lighting, the eponymous Rembrandt lighting, adding pleasing dimension and depth just by the lighting, creating natural and compelling imagery. With live video meetings, however, our looks are optimized using one steady lamp, directly by the face, for even, steady lighting, as with a ring light—it also gives us the appearance of sparkly eyes.

Janet Sellers is an award-winning artist, writer and speaker. Her art gallery and classes are in Colorado and world-wide on Zoom. She can be contacted at janetsellers@ocn.me

Snapshots of Our Community

Arlene's Beans helps fund armor



Above: On March 8, Arlene's Beans restaurant donated a \$1,000 check to help purchase rifle-rated body armor for Monument police officers. Body armor for police officers is an ongoing need because the armor expires. The funds will help Monument police officers get the body armor they need. From left are Marcy Deeds, Mayor Don Wilson, Arlene Padilla, Bobby Padilla, Chief Sean Hemingway, Commander John Hudson, and Sgt. Tim Johnson. For more information and to donate to this cause, contact Marcy Deeds, www.Shield616.org. *Photo by Janet Sellers.*

Local authors sign books, Mar. 20



Above: Local authors held book signings at Covered Treasures Bookstore on March 20. Linda K. Bridges, left, signed her children's book *Hildie's Hat Party*. The story follows woodland creatures who must solve a friend's problem before they can all attend the party. Bridges writes and illustrates her books. Her next project will be *Olivia Can't Fly*, a story about an owlet who learns flying is easier than she thought. Mike Torreano is the author of numerous historical fiction and western books including his latest, *A Score to Settle*. In this book, Del Lawson rides the Goodnight-Loving cattle trail seeking revenge but finding romance, too. *Photo by Allison Robenstein.*

Homestead Ranch Regional Park



Left: Homestead Ranch Regional Park features diverse topography ranging from rolling, open meadows to tree-covered bluffs running the length of the park. A natural spring-fed pond and creek in the central valley of the park attract deer, coyotes, foxes, waterfowl, and occasional pronghorns. Rattlesnake Butte, a prominent landmark in eastern El Paso County from which visitors can see the Front Range and the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in the distance, is located within the park. Location: 16444 Gollihar Road, Peyton. <https://communityservices.elpasoco.com/parks-and-recreation/homestead-ranch-regional-park/> *Photo by Lisa Hatfield.*

Palmer Lake bridge plaques



Left: On March 3, Bliss Studio welders installed several more donor train car plaques on the Palmer Lake pedestrian bridge, including this one donated by the Palmer Lake Historical Society (PLHS) Lucretia Vaile Museum to honor the town's railroad origins. Just as history is the record of a time gone by, the caboose marked the end of a train passing by. Proceeds from these donated train car designs go toward the cost of the bridge. The plaques are fabricated by Bliss Studios in Monument. In the early days of Palmer Lake, vehicles and townspeople could easily access the lake on bridges over the north and southbound railroad tracks. The new pedestrian bridge restores a safe pathway between the town's merchants and the lake. It's also a great overlook for train watching! For donor information, visit www.awakepalmerlake.org and click on Palmer Lake Bridge Fundraising Project. *Caption courtesy of Wayne Russert. Photo by Bonni Russert.*

Free ground cover-Purge the Spurge



Above: From 1 to 3 p.m. **Apr. 24**, bring your bagged myrtle spurge to the Colorado State University Extension office, El Paso County, at 17 N. Spruce St., Colorado Springs. The more myrtle spurge you bring, the more free groundcover plants you get. Myrtle spurge (*Euphorbia myrsinites*) (donkeytail spurge) is a highly invasive Colorado A List Species noxious weed. Be aware: This plant exudes toxic, milky latex, which can cause severe skin irritations. Wear protective gear when digging and bagging it. Free tickets are available at: www.eventbrite.com/e/purge-the-spurge-tickets-137366399599. *Photo courtesy Colorado Department of Agriculture.*

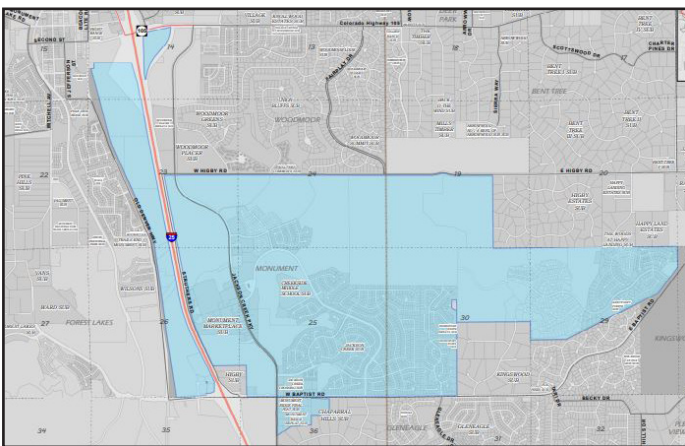
Vietnam War Veterans Day, Mar. 29



Above: National Vietnam War Veterans Day was marked on March 29 at the William Crawford memorial in Palmer Lake. Crawford was awarded the Medal of Honor for action during WWII. According to the Palmer Lake Historical Society, Crawford destroyed two German machine gun nests before taken prisoner. He had to endure a 500-mile, 52-day march in the winter. Crawford was reported missing in action and presumed dead. His father accepted a posthumous Medal of Honor for his son from President Franklin Roosevelt in 1943. Crawford was later found alive and was presented the same Medal of Honor in person by President Reagan in 1984. Attending the March 29 ceremony were members of VFW Post 7829 Monument, American Legion Post 9-11, and St. Peter Knights of Columbus Council 11514 Monument. Also attending were Monument Mayor Don Wilson and Palmer Lake Mayor Bill Bass. *Photo by Michael Pietsch.*

Which districts do you live in?

The Tri-Lakes area is composed of many interleaved layers of jurisdiction and taxation. The well-informed resident should be able to identify which (if any) municipality, metropolitan district, water and sanitation district, fire protection district, school district, and homeowners association collects taxes and fees and provides services to their home. **Hint to property owners:** You can also learn a lot by looking at your property tax bill. Make sure all members of your household, not just the billpayer, know the answers! See www.ocn.me/maps.htm for a list of clickable links so you can zoom in. As an example, residents of the Jackson Creek area receive most of their services not from the Town of Monument but from the Triview Metropolitan District: water; sewer; drainage; parks, recreation, and open space; mosquito abatement; and street maintenance. *Triview District Map courtesy of El Paso County Assessor.*



Thank You, Judy

By John Heiser, OCN Publisher
I first met George Barnes in 2001 when he was working at the Wells Fargo Bank in Monument. I talked with him about helping with a new all-volunteer publication a group of community-minded folks were planning. He said he was interested and added that his wife, Judy, would be interested as well. Judy and George participated in the early organizational meetings. Once we launched the paper, George helped with distributing copies and he and Judy wrote articles. Judy served as the Our Community News editor for many of the earliest issues. She continued editing even after she and George moved to California in 2004.

Starting in 2005 and continuing every month since, Judy has been carefully researching and writing our extensive community calendar and notices sections that fill the last four or



Judy Barnes

five pages of each issue.

Health challenges have now required that Judy step back from volunteering with OCN. We will be forever

grateful to Judy for her steadfast service to the community. It has been a joy to work with her to create and sustain this unique publication throughout the past 20 years.

Judy, all of us at OCN send our heartfelt appreciation and best wishes for a speedy recovery.

John Heiser can be contacted at johnheiser@ocn.me.



OCN photo contest winner



Above: The high winds that accompanied the snowstorm of March 14 and 15 created some beautiful, sometimes delicate-looking drifts. Some were as high as 5 feet. The snow on this statue outside our front door in the Lake of the Rockies subdivision looks like the angel had a head full of soap suds. *Photo by Tia M. Mayer.*

Keep them coming! Send your best "Life in Tri-Lakes" photo to editor@ocn.me no later than **Apr. 16**. Please don't send more than two photos. Include names of any people in the photo, date taken, a description of the activity or location, and the name of the photographer. Call Lisa at 719-339-7831 with questions.

Our Community Notices

By Lisa Hatfield, Ross Meyer, and Marlene Brown, this month's calendar team. We miss Judy Barnes' expert work on the calendar and notices. If you are interested in helping OCN compile the monthly calendar and notices, please write to calendar@ocn.me.

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

Feeling hopeless, anxious, or depressed?

Everybody needs a little help sometimes. Pikes Peak Suicide Prevention Connection has a support group for young people, Teen Talk Group, that meets **Sundays** at 6 p.m. The Adult Peers Support Group meets **Mondays**, 7-8 p.m. The Colorado Crisis Services Line is available 24/7. Call 1-844-493-TALK (8255). For more information visit pikespeaksuicideprevention.org, or call 719-573-7447, or text 719-232-4875, or email info@pikespeaksuicideprevention.org. If you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency, please call 911.

Jewish Family Service offers counseling

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

Free income tax help, ends April 15

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program provides free income tax preparation assistance to individuals and families with a household income of \$56,000 a year or less. To find out if you qualify or to schedule an appointment, call 2-1-1 or text VITANOW to 85511 Mon. through Fri., 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

High School Senior Scholarship Applications
The Black Forest Arts and Craft Guild will be awarding at least one scholarship of \$1,000 to a high school senior. See www.bfacg.org for application and submission information. Please note that you must reside within our boundaries listed in the instructions.

Colorado COVID vaccine information

There is currently a limited supply of COVID-19 vaccines. This means a vaccine will not be immediately available to everyone who wants one. To be as fair and efficient with distribution as possible, the state has developed a phased approach to vaccine distribution to save lives and end the crisis that has been brought on by the pandemic as quickly as possible. By vaccinating people who are most likely to get COVID-19 first, we can keep more Coloradans safe.

- To see who is eligible to receive a vaccine, see <https://covid19.colorado.gov/for-coloradans/vaccine/find-out-when-youre-eligible-for-a-covid-19-vaccine>
- Residents may call Pikes Peak United Way 2-1-1 to receive information about the vaccine and assistance and other senior support services.
- Pikes Peak region community members can now text "vaccine" (for English) or "vacuna" (for Spanish) to 667873 to get contact information for their preferred vaccine provider.

Are you experiencing hardship?

Connect with Tri-Lakes Cares for assistance with groceries, rent or mortgage, utilities, car repair, and medical assistance at www.tri-lakescares.org/coronavirus. For more information, call 719-481-4864.

Volunteer with Tri-Lakes Cares (TLC)

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://tri-lakescares.org/volunteer/>.

Getting Ahead sponsors needed

Tri-Lakes Cares announced that it will hold a Getting Ahead class this spring. Getting Ahead is a small group program that looks at poverty and unstable situations through the lens of economic class to bet-

ter understand how our society works. Participants in the class—called "investigators"—examine their own experience of hardship as well as explore community issues that affect poverty such as housing, jobs, relationships, and transportation. The purpose of Getting Ahead is to help the investigators identify areas of action and movement in their own lives to help them move forward to a better future. Tri-Lakes Cares is proud to have offered this class yearly since 2016 (apart from last year), and many graduates of the program have improved their lives. Some have gotten better jobs, some have returned to school to work for a higher degree, and others have pursued business opportunities and artistic endeavors. Getting Ahead is not the end of poverty, but a step in the right direction. If you are interested in sponsoring an investigator through the Getting Ahead program or supporting this program with a financial donation, please reach out to Josh Green, 719-481-4864 x108 or JoshG@Tri-LakesCares.org. If you, or someone you know, might benefit from this class, please contact Joseph Figueroa, 719-481-4864 x112, JosephF@Tri-LakesCares.org for more information.

TLC needs us now more than ever

Tri-Lakes Cares is the only food pantry and human services organization located in and serving northern El Paso County through emergency, self-sufficiency, and relief programs. The community-based, volunteer-supported center is a critical resource for our neighbors in need. The best way to help support Tri-Lakes Cares is to make a financial donation. For more information about Tri-Lakes Cares or how you can help, contact Nicole Pettigrew, director of Volunteers and Community Partnership, at 719-481-4864 Ext. 111; communityengagementmanager@tri-lakescares.org; or visit www.tri-lakescares.org.

2021 Black Forest Slash-Mulch Schedule

Black Forest Slash-Mulch Program is a Wildfire Mitigation and Recycling Program. It accepts slash (trees, limbs, and brush debris only, max. length 6 feet, max. diameter 8 inches) (no stumps, roots, weeds, grass, lumber, or trash). Cost to drop off slash is \$2 per load. Mulch loader fee \$5 per bucket, about 2 cubic yards. Co-sponsored by the El Paso County Environmental Division, Colorado Forestry Association and the Black Forest Fire Department, in cooperation with the Colorado State Forest Service and the State Board of Land Commissioners. Hours: Saturdays, 7 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sundays, noon-4 p.m.; and Tuesday and Thursday evenings, 5-7:30 p.m. The mulch loader schedule is Saturdays only, 7 a.m.-4 p.m. on specified days. See www.bfslash.org for form to bring with you, or phone the county Environmental Division, 520-7878. Southeast corner of Shoup and Herring Roads in Black Forest.

Donate live trees for Black Forest recovery

Black Forest Together needs your help! BFT is hoping to launch the fourth year of our Trees 4 Tomorrow program, which has transplanted just under 4,000 trees into the burn scar. We need new tree donor sites in order to launch the program. As always, all tree donations are tax-deductible. Donating your trees is a great way to help mitigate your property and help your burn-victim neighbors restore theirs. To help keep overhead and costs down: site must be 25 acres or larger, have easy access for a truck and trailer, have at least 100 trees to donate. Trees need to be 3 to 8 feet tall, with a trunk diameter of 2½ to 4 inches. Doghair (thickets of seedlings) will not be removed. If you are interested in donating to our program or know someone who is, please contact us at Resourcecenter@blackforesttogether.org or call 719-368-0500.

BOCC seeks Master Plan comments

The El Paso Board of County Commissioners draft Master Plan is launched for public review and comment. See related BOCC article on page 1 and ad on page 13. The plan will guide local development for the next 20 to 30 years. The 150-page document is available for review on the county's website at <https://elpaso.hlplanning.com/pages/draft-plan-outreach>. The county is asking for comments by **April 9**. An updated draft will then be reviewed by the county Planning Commission at a first hearing scheduled for May 5.

El Paso County Road Safety Plan

Tell us your thoughts on road safety issues in El Paso County, and where you have experienced safety concerns. The El Paso County Road Safety Plan Project Team will incorporate this feedback into the plan including, but not limited to, identifying emphasis areas, selecting proven countermeasures, and in de-

veloping an implementation list. See website to enter comments on the interactive map. epcsaferroads.com/leave-comments

Road conditions: Stay Informed

Travelers are urged to "know before you go." Gather information about weather forecasts and anticipated travel impacts and current road conditions before hitting the road. CDOT resources include:

- Road conditions and travel information: www.COtrip.org or call 511.
- Project or travel alerts: bit.ly/COalerts
- Scheduled lane closures: codot.gov/travel/scheduled-lane-closures.html
- Avalanche conditions—CAIC: www.avalanche.state.co.us/
- Social media: Twitter @coloradodot and Facebook facebook.com/coloradodot

YMCA Summer Day Camp & spring sports

Discover Summer YMCA Summer Day Camp for ages 5-12. Weekly sessions through Aug. 13. Register at ppymca.org/daycamp. Also register for Flag Football, Volleyball & Soccer. Find out more at ppymca.org/springsports. Financial assistance available. See ad on page 6.

Monument Hill Foundation grants

The Monument Hill Foundation, the charitable arm of the Monument Hill Kiwanis Club, has an annual granting program. Grants are awarded for projects that best advance the foundation mission of supporting youth and community in Tri-Lakes and northern El Paso County. Applications will be accepted from **April 15** through **May 31**. The grant application is available at monumenthillfoundation.org (select "Apply for a Grant") See ad on page 8.

McCord's Garden Center is open

Spring is on its way. The garden center is located at 2720 McShane Dr., Monument. For more information, call 719-375-3573 or visit www.mccordgardens.com. See ad on page 5.

Volunteer for Monumental Impact

Monumental Impact is a nonprofit in the Tri-Lakes area focused on enabling and supporting high school students in technology, engineering, and entrepreneurship with experiences and community. Monumental Impact provides opportunities for students to explore these careers and supports Bearbotics in its current competitive build season. The group was founded in 2020 and is now looking for volunteers to serve on the board of directors and/or to serve as mentors in our community. To find out more, call 719-387-7414, email volunteer@monumentalimpact.org, or visit <https://monumentalimpact.org/community/>.

WMMI seeks volunteers

Western Museum of Mining & Industry (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. See ad on page 20.

Mining Heritage of Colorado Springs

WMMI is celebrating the 150th anniversary of Colorado Springs with "The Mining Heritage of Colorado Springs," through August. The exhibit will highlight the operations of the coal industry, the gold ore processing mills that stood west of the city, the railroads that serviced the coal and mining industries, Winfield Scott Stratton and his legacy, the El Pomar story, Cripple Creek railroad millionaires and their Colorado Springs mansions. 225 North Gate Blvd, Colorado Springs 80921, 719-488-0880. For additional information, <https://wmmi.org/>.

The Sisters of Benet Hill offer spiritual direction, online and by phone

People of all faiths are welcome to grow in their spiritual life through spiritual direction. Sister Therese O'Grady will help you find a spiritual director; phone her at 719-473-8764 or email stherese@benethillmonastery.org. See ad on page 11.

Sisters' Thrift & Boutique is open

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

MVEA board nominations open

The board election will take place during the annual

meeting June 3. If you are interested in being a candidate, find application details at www.mvea.coop. For more information, phone 719-494-2528 or email candidate@mvea.org. See ad on page 12.

Driver and vehicle services available online and at kiosks

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

Silver Key senior citizen luncheons

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

Silver Key Calls of Reassurance

Extended social isolation and loneliness significantly impact the quality of life and health of older adults. The current public health crisis has increased the need for seniors to receive these critical calls and connection with others. Seniors who self-enroll can be called weekly (one to three times) to talk with a Silver Key volunteer. It offers two types of helpful calls.

Social Calls are for seniors who wish to have a weekly, bright, and supportive connection with a well-trained VIP volunteer. Safety Checks are similar to Social Calls, but if the senior does not answer after three calls, emergency contacts (maintained on file) will be called, then the police if the emergency contacts cannot be reached. For more details, visit www.silverkey.org.

Small-business grants available

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

St. Peter Catholic School now enrolling

St. Peter is offering in-person learning five days a week. Preschool through eighth grade feature academics, athletics, and faith formation. Visit the website for a virtual tour or call the school to schedule an in-person tour. For more information, call 719-481-1855 or visit petertherockschool.org. See ad on page 2.

Free transportation and handyman services

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

Help protect firefighters and yourselves

Hundreds of firefighters across the country have COVID-19. Even with personal protective equipment and strong infection control procedures, hundreds of firefighters are sick. Some have died. Here are some steps you can take to make it safer for firefighters and

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

Can you volunteer today?

Links to local organizations with an immediate need for volunteers are listed on the county’s website, www.elpasocountyhealth.org/volunteering-and-donations, for groups like Care and Share, Crossfire Ministries, blood donations, Early Connections (volunteer from home opportunity), foster an animal, Medical Reserve Corps of El Paso County, Salvation Army, Silver Key, and United Way (ongoing opportunities).

Senior Beat newsletter—subscribe for free

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

Solar Power co-op forming

Solar United Neighbors is a nonprofit 501C3 forming a group in the area. It will help residents and businesses learn about solar energy. The co-op is free to join; for more information see www.solarunitedneighbors.org/ColoradoSprings.

■

Our Community Calendar

By Lisa Hatfield, Ross Meyer, and Marlene Brown, this month’s calendar team. We miss Judy Barnes’ expert work on the calendar and notices. If you are interested in helping OCN compile the monthly calendar and notices, please write to calendar@ocn.me.

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

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

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

GOVERNMENTAL BODIES

- **Monument Board of Trustees Meeting**, Mon., Apr. 5, 6:30 p.m., Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Normally meets 1st and 3rd Mon. each month. Info: 719-884-8017, www.townofmonument.org/260/Board-of-Trustees for remote attendance links.
- **El Paso Board of County Commissioners Meeting, view agendas and meetings at www.agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso**, Tue., Apr. 6 & Thu., Apr. 8, 9 a.m. Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade Ave., Suite 150, Colo. Springs. Meets every Tue. and Thu. Info: 719-520-6430, www.agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso.
- **El Paso County Planning Commission Meeting, live-streamed at elpasoco.com/public-meetings/**, Thu., Apr. 1 & 15, 1 p.m., Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade Ave., Suite 150, Colo. Springs. Meets 1st & 3rd Thu. (if required) each month. Info: 719-520-6300, <https://planningdevelopment.elpasoco.com/>.
- **Monument Academy School Board Meeting**, Thu., Apr. 8, 6 p.m., see website for YouTube meeting link. Meets 2nd Thu. each month. Info: 719-481-1950, www.monumentacademy.net/school-board/board-meeting-minutes/.
- **Palmer Lake Town Council Meeting**, Thu., Apr. 8, 6 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Meets 2nd Thu. each month. Info: 719-481-2953, www.townofpalmerlake.com.
- **Woodmoor Water & Sanitation District Board Meeting**, Mon., Apr. 12, 1 p.m., 1845 Woodmoor Dr., Monument. Meets 2nd Mon. each month. Info: 719-488-2525, www.woodmoorwater.com.


- **Tri-Lakes Wastewater Facility Joint Use Committee Meeting**, Tue., Apr. 13, 10 a.m., 16510 Mitchell Ave. Meets 2nd Tue. each month. Info: Bill Burks, 719-481-4053.
- **El Paso Board of County Commissioners Meeting, live-streamed at www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel**, Tue., Apr. 13, 9 a.m. Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade Ave., Suite 150, Colo. Springs. Meets every Tue. Info: 719-520-6430, www.agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso/meeting/list.
- **D-38 District Accountability Advisory Committee (DAAC)**, Wed., Apr. 13, 7 p.m., <https://www.youtube.com/user/LPSDCCommunity>. Info: 719.481.9546, vwood@lewispalmer.org.
- **Palmer Lake Sanitation District Board Meeting, call in only: 650-479-3208, Access Code 76439078**, Wed., Apr. 14, 9 a.m., 120 Middle Glenway. Meets 2nd Wed. each month. Info: 719-481-2732. www.plsd.org.
- **Monument Planning Commission Meeting**, Wed., Apr. 14, 6 p.m. Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Meets 2nd Wed. each month. Public attendance will be limited to remote attendance. To see the options for remote public participation in each meeting, visit www.townofmonument.org/263/Planning-Commission-Board-of-Adjustment. Info: 719-884-8028. www.townofmonument.org.
- **The Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments**, a voluntary organization of 16 counties and municipalities, offers several programs that may be of interest to our readers. One example: PPLD Partnership Medicare Series. Info: www.ppacg.org, (719) 471-7080.
- **Monument Academy School Board Meeting**, Thu., Apr. 8, 6:00 PM, Board meets 2nd Thu. each month. Info: 719-481-1950, www.monumentacademy.net/school-board/board-meeting-minutes/.
- **Palmer Lake Town Board of Trustees Meeting**, Thu., Apr. 8, 6 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Meets 2nd Thu. each month. Info: 719-481-2953, www.townofpalmerlake.com.
- **Lewis-Palmer School District 38 Board Meeting, livestream on the district’s YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/LPSDCCommunity**, Mon., Apr. 19, 6-10 p.m., Learning Center, 146 Jefferson St., Monument. Meets 3rd Mon. each month. Find the agenda and supporting documents at <https://go.boarddocs.com/co/lewispalmer/Board.nsf/vpublic>. Info: (719) 488-4700, vwood@lewispalmer.org, www.lewispalmer.org.
- **Monument Board of Trustees Meeting**, Mon., Apr. 19, 6:30 p.m., Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Normally meets 1st and 3rd Mon. each month. Info: 719-884-8017, [- ment.org/260/Board-of-Trustees for remote attendance links.
 - o **Wescott Fire Protection District Board Meeting. If the meeting is held in person, it will be at Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Dr. For a virtual meeting, the phone number is 669-900-9128, and the meeting code is 980 378 2073.** Tue., Apr. 20, 4 p.m. Meetings are usually on the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. For information, call Executive Administrator Stacey Popovich at 719-488-8680 or see \[www.wescottfire.org\]\(http://www.wescottfire.org\).
 - **Monument Sanitation District Board Meeting**, Wed, Apr. 21, 9 a.m., 130 2nd St. Zoom meeting. Find joining instructions on the website. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: 719-481-4886, \[www.colorado.gov/msd\]\(http://www.colorado.gov/msd\).
 - **Academy Water and Sanitation District Board Meeting, the public can join the Skype meeting: <https://join.skype.com/PACujKTn7Nrh>. Check the website for a link: <https://academywsd.colorado.gov/notices-and-alerts>.** Wed., Apr. 21, 6 p.m., Wescott Fire Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Dr. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: 719-481-0711, <https://academywsd.colorado.gov>.
 - **Palmer Lake Town Planning Commission Meeting**, Wed., Apr 21, 6 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: 719-481-2953, \[www.townofpalmerlake.com\]\(http://www.townofpalmerlake.com\).](http://www.townofmonu-</div><div data-bbox=)

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- **Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District Board Meeting**, Wed, **Apr. 21**, 7 p.m., Station 1, 11445 Teachout Rd. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: 719-495-4300, www.bffire.org.
- **El Paso County Planning Commission Meeting, live-streamed at www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel**, Thu., **Apr. 22**, 1 p.m., 200 S. Cascade Ave., Suite 150, Colo. Springs. Meets 1st & 3rd Thu. (if required) each month. Info: 719-520-6300, elpasoco.com/public-meetings/.
- **Donala Water & Sanitation District Board Workshop, check the website for the access code for the electronic meeting**, Thu., **Apr. 15**, 9 a.m., 15850 Holbein Dr. Meets 3rd Thu. each month. Info: 719-488-3603, www.donalawater.org.
- **Triview Metropolitan District Board Meeting, check the website**, Thu., **Apr. 22**, 5:30 p.m., 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302, Monument. Meets 3rd Thu. each month. Info: 719-488-6868, www.triviewmetro.com.
- **Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District Board Meeting, Zoom meeting. Find joining instructions at www.tlmfire.org or contact Jennifer Martin, 719-484-0911**. Wed., **Apr. 28**, 6:30 p.m., TLMFPD Station 1, 18650 Hwy 105. Meets 4th Wed. each month. Info: Jennifer Martin, 719-484-0911, www.tlmfire.org.
- **Woodmoor Improvement Association Board Meeting**, Wed., **Apr. 28**, 7 p.m., Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. Meets 4th Wed. each month. Info: 719-488-2693, www.woodmoor.org.

WEEKLY & MONTHLY EVENTS

- **Group of Artists (GOA) Meetings at Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA), SUSPENDED**, Sat., **Apr. 3**, 10 a.m.-noon, 304 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Lively discussions about art topics, general studies on creativity. Meets 1st Sat. each month. Info: 481-0475, info@trilakesarts.org
- **Colorado Springs Philharmonic Guild Listening Club, free virtual event via Zoom**, Tue., **Apr. 13**, 2 p.m. Maestro Wilson will conduct monthly, one-hour programs. This first program features Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. RVSP at www.cpsguild.org
- **Monument Hill Kiwanis Club Meeting, Zoom meeting, MHKiwanis.org, MonumentHillKiwanis@gmail.com for details; every Sat., 9 a.m.**, Guests are welcome at weekly meetings featuring speakers on a variety of topics and a free continental breakfast at normal meetings. Memberships open to the public. Join the 150+ men & women of the Tri-Lakes area who work together to make a difference for youth and our community. Info: RF Smith, 719-210-4987, www.MH-Kiwanis.org. See ad on page 3.
- **Neighborhood Net**, every **Sat.**, 10 a.m. Amateur radio operators practice for emergencies on weekly repeater nets so neighbors can help neighbors. Sign up at www.mereowx.org/neighborhood-net or contactus@mereowx.org.
- **The Wine Seller Free Wine Tastings, SUSPENDED**, every **Sat.**, 1-4 p.m., 2805 Roberts Dr., Monument. Info: 719-488-3019, www.thewineseller.net.
- **Bingo by the American Legion, SUSPENDED**, every **Sat.**, game sales start at 6 p.m., games start at 7 p.m., the Depot Restaurant, in Palmer Lake. Proceeds go to scholarships and other community support activities. Info: 719-481-8668, <http://legionpost9-11.org/>.
- **Lions Clubs Bingo, SUSPENDED**, every **Sat.**, 10 a.m., and **Wed.**, 7 p.m.; Carefree Bingo, 3440 N. Carefree Circle, Colo. Springs. Tri-Lakes Lions Club's portion of the proceeds benefit those in need in the Tri-Lakes Community. Info: Jim Naylor, 719-481-8741 or www.trilakeslionsclub.org
- **Lucretia Vaile Museum, closed for now**, 66 Lower Glenway St., Palmer Lake. Free. The museum houses items of local historical significance. Special displays rotate every 4-6 months. Info: 719-559-0837, <https://palmerdividehistory.org/>.
- **Artful Outdoors**, every **Sat.-Sun.**, 1-3 p.m. and by appointment. Join Janet Sellers for weekly art and nature talks and DIY art techniques at local nature and art spots. All ages, good social distancing, masks required, all outdoors for now. Limited to 5 at a time for now. Info: janetsellers@ocn.me, www.StartMyArt.com.
- **Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church, both in-person and livestream at tlumc.org/live every Sun.**, 8 & 11 a.m. traditional, 9:30 a.m. contemporary. Watch live or on replay: facebook.com/tlumc, youtube.com/tlumc. Registration required for in-person worship tlumc.org/registration. Info: 719-488-1365, tlumc.org. See ad on page 3.
- **Fuel Church Sunday Service**, every **Sun.**, Connection 9:30-10 a.m., In person Easter service 10 a.m. (live service streaming at fuelchurch.org at 10:40 a.m.), Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Non-denominational, spirit led. Info: info@fuel.org. See ad on page 8.
- **Chess Nuts**, every **Mon.**, 1 p.m., Silver Alliance Senior Center, across the street from the YMCA. Any age, any skill. Learners welcome. Drop in and leave when you want. Bring your own board and pieces if you have them. Info: www.TriLakesSeniors.org/chess.
- **Women's A.A. Step Study, meeting remotely, check for details**, every **Mon.**, 6:30 p.m., Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 Baptist Rd. Park in west lot. Info: 866-641-9190.

- **Monument Life Recovery Group, SUSPENDED, check the website**, every **Mon.**, 6:30-8 p.m., The Ascent Church, 1750 Deer Creek Rd. This faith-based support group is for those seeking freedom from all hurts, habits, and hang-ups. Daycare provided for children under age 11. Info: 719-481-3600, liferecoverygroups.com/meetings/life-recovery-group-3/.
- **Monument Hill Kiwanis Bingo, SUSPENDED**, every **Mon.**, 7:30 p.m., Carefree Bingo, 3440 N. Carefree Circle, Colo. Springs. All proceeds benefit those in need in the Tri-Lakes Community. Info: bingo@mhkiwanis.org.
- **Senior Citizen Luncheons, Connections Café sites will have “grab and go” (prepared meals)**. A \$2.25 donation is requested. Please call 719-884-2300 to reserve your meal. Meals on Wheels and Home Delivered Meals will deliver frozen meals for the week to Monument on Wednesdays. Food Pantry offers a “pick up only” model for clients. **Mon.-Fri.**, 12-12:30 p.m., Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. See the menu for the month in the Senior Beat newsletter. Stay for bingo the 2nd Thu. each month. Reservations are requested, phone 719-884 2300.
- **Western Museum of Mining & Industry (WMMI)**, every **Mon., Wed., Fri., & Sat.**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., 225 North Gate Blvd. (I-25 Exit 156 A). Group tours are suspended temporarily. Masks required. Cost: \$11 adults, \$10 military/AAA, \$9 seniors & students, \$6 children 3-12, free to children under 3 & museum members. Info: 719-488-0880, info@wmmi.org, www.wmmi.org.
- **Western Museum of Mining & Industry (WMMI), Lecture Series, check the website**, 225 North Gate Blvd. (I-25 Exit 156 A). RSVP & Info: 488-0880, RSVP@wmmi.org, www.wmmi.org.
- **Tri-Lakes Silver Alliance Thrift Store**, open **Mon.-Sat.**, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., 755 Hwy 105, Suite N, in the West End Center. All proceeds support Tri-Lakes Senior Programs. Volunteers needed, phone 716-464-6873. To donate furniture, call 719-488-3495 for a pickup. Info: www.TriLakesSeniors.org.
- **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-brandon>.
- **Adult Children of Alcoholics/Dysfunctional Families Meeting: ACA Promises**, every **Tue.**, 6:30-7:30 p.m. As a child, did you develop a false self in order to survive? See quiz at <https://adultchildren.org/newcomer/am-i-an-adult-child/>. The solution is learning to re-parent ourselves with gentleness, humor, love, and respect. Meeting via Zoom. Call/text Stacey 206-384-8285 or see www.adultchildren.org (click on Newcomer), information@acawso.com
- **Al-anon Meeting: Monument Serenity, visit www.al-anon-co.org to find online and phone meetings** every **Tue.**, 7:30-8:30 p.m., Ascent Church (formerly the Tri-Lakes Chapel), 1750 Deer Creek Rd., Monument. Info: Kay, 719-481-9258, www.al-anon-co.org.
- **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, trilakeseniors.org
- **Peak Reader Children's Literacy Program, SUSPENDED**, every **Tue. & Thu.**, 5:30-6:30 p.m., Monument Branch Library, 1706 Lake Woodmoor Dr. Free one-to-one tutoring for children reading below grade level. To enroll your child or volunteer as a tutor, visit www.childrensliteracycenter.org or call 719-471-8672.
- **Tri-Lakes Church of Christ Wednesday Night Fellowship Meal (Free) & Classes, SUSPENDED**, every **Wed.**, 6-7:30 p.m., 20450 Beacon Lite Road, Monument (Corner of Beacon Lite & County Line Roads). Info: 488-9613, gregsmith@trilakeschurch.org, www.trilakeschurch.org.
- **Kehilat, Zoom Bible Study**, every **Wed.** 6:15 p.m. starting Apr. 21. Bring your hungry and tired so they can be filled and more blessed. Ms. Williams, 719-453-6279. See ad on page 6.
- **Al-anon Meeting: Letting Go, visit www.al-anon-co.org to find on-line and phone meetings** every **Thu.**, 9-10:10 a.m., Ascent Church, 1750 Deer Creek Rd., Monument. Info: www.al-anon.co.org.
- **A.A. Big Book Study, Call 425-436-6200, access code 575176#** every **Thu.**, 7 p.m., Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 W. Baptist Rd. Info: 719-481-0431.
- **The Speedtrap offers Take Out**, 84 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Music on the Patio every weekend in March. Info: 719-488-2007, www.speedtrapbistro.com. See ad on page 5.
- **Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS), check website**, every **Fri.**, 8 a.m., Monument Chamber of Commerce, 166 2nd St., Monument. Info: Terry, 719-684-4912, or visit www.TOPS.org.
- **Black Forest AARP Potluck Lunch & Meeting, all in-person AARP activities are canceled through the first quarter of 2021**, 12455 Black Forest Rd. All ages welcome. Meets 2nd Wed. each month. RSVP & info: Stan, 596-6787, www.aarpchapter1100blackforest.weebly.com.
- **Foot Care Clinic**, By appointment only. Silver Alliance Senior Center located across the street from the

- Tri-Lakes YMCA, on the Lewis-Palmer High School campus. A registered nurse examines your feet and provides foot care advice, toenail trimming. Info: Nurse Association, 719-577-4448.
- **Bridge, SUSPENDED**, Thu., **Apr. 8**, Silver Alliance Senior Center, 1300 Higby Rd., Monument. Meets 2nd Thu. each month, Sept.-June. Info: www.trilakes-seniors.org/programs/events.html.
- **Senior Bingo, SUSPENDED**, Thu., **Apr. 8**, Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake, after the senior lunch. Come for lunch at noon, then stay and play. Free! Prizes! Meets 2nd Thu. each month. Info: Maggie Nealon, 719-488-3037.
- **Ben Lomond Gun Club, SUSPENDED**, Thu., **Apr. 15**, Tri-Lakes Chapter meets 2nd Thu. each month. Info: <https://blgc.org/>.
- **Silver Center Book Club**, Fri., **Apr. 9**, 11 a.m.-noon, Senior Center located across the street from the Tri-Lakes YMCA, on Lewis-Palmer High School campus. All are welcome. Meets 2nd Fri. each month. Coffee & snacks served. RSVP & Info: Sue, 719-330-0241. www.trilakeseniors.org/programs/events.
- **El Paso County Hazardous Materials & Recycling Collection Facility. <https://communityservices.elpasoco.com/environmental-division/> Appointments required.** 719-520-7878.
- **Palmer Lake Art Group, check the website**, Sat., **Apr. 10**, Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. A variety of art programs is offered after the social gathering and business meeting. Guests welcome. Meets 2nd Sat. each month. Info: 719-460-4179, www.palmerlakeartgroup.com.
- **Amateur Radio W0TLM (Tri-Lakes Monument Radio Association), check the website**, Mon., **Apr. 19**, all amateur radio operators or those interested in becoming one are welcome. Meets 3rd Mon. Info: Joyce Witte, 719-661-9824, Joycewitte@gmail.com; www.W0TLM.com.
- **Gleneagle Sertoma Luncheon Meeting, SUSPEND-ED**, Wed., **Apr. 7 & 21**, 11:30 a.m., Liberty Heights, 12105 Ambassador Dr., Colo. Springs. Interesting speakers and programs; all are welcome. Meets 1st & 3rd Wed. each month. Info: Garrett Barton, 719-433-5396; Duane Gritzmaker, 719-481-2424; www.gleneaglesertoma.org.
- **Senior Bingo**, Wed., **Apr. 21**, Silver Alliance Senior Center, Lewis-Palmer High School campus. Masks required. Space is limited to 16 participants; RSVP required. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. RSVP & Info: Sue Walker, 719-464-6873, or email sue@monumentalfitness.
- **Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7829, via Zoom.com; POC Delbert Zehrung, 559-362-3223**. Wed., **Apr. 21**, 7 p.m., The Country Club at Woodmoor, 18945 Pebble Beach Way, Monument. New members welcome. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: Post Commander Joe Carlson, 405-326-2588, jcarlson@vfw7829.org, www.vfw7829.org.
- **VFW Auxiliary to Post 7829, meeting by videoconference**, Wed., **Apr. 21**, 7 p.m., The Country Club at Woodmoor, 18945 Pebble Beach Way, Monument. Guests are welcome to join; contact carlsonmkc@aol.com for instructions on how to connect. If you are a male or female relative of a veteran who served on foreign soil during war or other military action, you may be eligible. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: Kathy Carlson, 719-488-1902, carlsonmkc@aol.com.
- **Palmer Lake Historical Society Meeting, SUSPENDED**, Thu., **Apr. 15**, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. All are welcome. Meets 3rd Thu. each month. Info: 719-559-0837, www.palmerdividehistory.org.
- **Gleneagle Women's Club, SUSPENDED**, Come for lunch, book discussions, bridge, and more. Location for lunch varies. Meets every third Fri., Sept.-June. Info: Syble Krafft, 719-488-2669.
- **Tri-Lakes Parkinson's Disease Support Group, SUSPENDED**; 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. Meets 3rd Sat. each month. Info: Syble Krafft, 719-488-2669; Barry (group president), 719-351-9485.
- **Faithful Friends discussion group, Sat., Apr. 24**, 3254 Forest Lakes Dr., Monument. Call Ellen for this month's engaging discussion topic, 303-526-5000.
- **Grief Share Support Group**, Tue., **Apr. 27**, 10:30 a.m.-noon, Tri-Lakes Senior Center, across the street from the YMCA. The Tri-Lakes Silver Alliance has partnered with Colorado Palliative & Hospice Care to host a 13-session grief support group in Monument. Meets last Tue. each month. RSVP & Info: Sue Walker, 719-330-0241.
- **Tri-Lakes Chamber Monthly Education Series**. 166 Second St., Monument. Free event for members and non-members. Please register for virtual attendance information: www.trilakeschamber.com. Info: 481-3282.
- **Senior Social, all in person AARP activities are canceled through the first quarter of 2021**, Wed., **Apr. 28**, 1-4 p.m., 12455 Black Forest Rd. Meets 4th Wed. each month except Nov. & Dec. Info: aarpchapter-1100blackforest.weebly.com.
- **Friends of Fox Run Park, Zoom meeting**, Thu., **Apr. 22**, 6-7:00 p.m., email friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.

com and 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. Meets 4th Thu. each month. Info: marlenebrown@ocn.me.

- **Myasthenia Gravis Association** of Colorado Support Group. Location varies. Info: Carolyn, 488-3620, www.4-mga.org, 303-360-7080, 4mga@4-mga.org.

SPECIAL EVENTS

- **Western Museum of Mining & Industry (WMMI), Family Day**, Sat., Apr. 10, 10-3 p.m., numerous indoor and outdoor events will be available, no cost for outdoor events, food for purchase will be available, see www.wmmi.org or ad on page 20 for details.
- **Monumental Impact's Internship Symposium**, Mon., **Apr. 12**, 55 Adams St. (email for virtual link alternative). 4 p.m. For high school students. Monumental Impact will share their internship opportunities for students in technology, engineering, and entrepreneurship. Pikes Peak Workforce Center will be presenting job hunting tips and highlighting jobs in the area. Register: monumentalimpact.org/internship-symposium/. For info and remote link: enable@monumentalimpact.org.
- **Grace Best Master Plan Steering Committee**, Wed., **Apr. 14**, Community Dialogue on future plans for the Grace Best facility. For more information on this project, www.lewispalmer.org/GraceBestPlan or contact info@lewispalmer.org or (719)785-4223.
- **Ham (Amateur) Radio License Class, on Zoom**, Sat. **Apr. 17**, Sun., **Apr. 18** & Sat., **Apr. 24**, plus one in-person test session Sun., **Apr. 25** in Monument. Sponsored by Tri-Lakes Monument Radio Association. The worldwide excitement of amateur radio and the very best emergency communications capability available. No Morse code required. Students must buy text book. To register, https://w0t1m.com/radio-classes/tech-registration. Contact Bob Witte KØNR bob@k0nr.com.
- **Career Pathways Explorer Program**, Mon., **Apr. 19**, Mon., **Apr 26**, Mon. & **May 3**, 55 Adams St. (email for virtual link alternative). 4 p.m. For high school students. Sessions presented by Pikes Peak Workforce Center: Career Options, Resumes and Applications, Rock the Interview. Register: monumentalimpact.org/career-pathways-explorer/. For info: enable@monumentalimpact.org.
- **Earth Day**, Thu., **Apr. 22**, theme - Restore Our Earth - learn how to help, www.earthday.org sign up to work locally and globally.
- **Earth Day Event with Friends of Fox Run Park**, Thu., **Apr. 22**, 6-8 pm. Trails Etiquette Talk and monthly meeting. Hybrid (zoom or in-person) meeting on location TBA. Fun Monument venue for more information and to reserve your spot email FriendsOfFoxRunPark@gmail.com.
- **Help Friends of Fox Run Park**, Sat., **Apr. 24**, celebrate Earth Day with combo in-person and Zoom talks at Southwinds Fine Art Gallery (16575 Roller Coaster Rd.) at 1p.m. Learn about the history of Fox Farms (the park's namesake) in northern parts of El Paso County by Julie Haverluk, local teacher and historian. Then join Janet Sellers, local artist and writer, for a sneak preview of mindful forest and wildlife walks at the park. The event will be from noon to 3 depending upon the weather. For more information and Zoom link, email friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com or janetsellers@ocn.me
- **Purge the Spurge**: Exchange your spurge for FREE groundcover, Sat. **Apr. 24**, 1 to 3 p.m. The more (bagged!) myrtle spurge you bring, the more plants you get. Colorado State University Extension - El Paso County, 17 N. Spruce St., Colorado Springs. Myrtle

- spurge is a highly invasive Colorado A List Species noxious weed. This plant exudes toxic, milky latex, which can cause severe skin irritations; wear protective gear when digging and bagging it up. Free tickets are available at: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/purge-the-spurge-tickets-137366399599.
- **Black Forest Arts & Craft Guild sale**. Wed. **Apr. 28** - Sun. **May 2**. Thousands of handmade craft items, baked goods, etc. Hours and more info, www.bfacg.org.
 - **Arbor Day in Town of Monument**, Fri., **Apr 30**, 10 a.m. Waterwise Garden demonstration and tree planting. For more information, http://townofmonument.org/ and social media.
 - **Our Community News mailing days**, Thu. -Fri., **Apr. 28-30**. We need your help for an hour or two. Email editor@ocn.me for slots available to help count and prepare 21,500 newspapers for the USPS mailing.
 - **Colorado Springs Walk to Defeat ALS—Walk Your Way**, Sat., **May 1**, 10 a.m.-noon. You choose where you and your team walk! Enjoy your day filled with love, community, and support. We need your help in fighting ALS on all fronts—fundraising, advocacy, and research. http://web.alsa.org/coloradospringswalk, Nicole Hebert, 303-832-2322.
 - **Ready Set Go! - Wildland Fire Prevention/Mitigation Day**, Sat. **May 15**, 9 am - noon, on grounds of Lewis-Palmer Elementary School 1315 Lake Woodmoor Dr, Monument. See before & after demonstrations of wildfire vegetation risk reduction. Dave Root Colorado State Forester, Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control, and the El Paso County Sheriff's Department Wildland Crew. See www.tlmfire.org or jbumgarner@tlmfire.org for details.
 - **Join Friends of Fox Run Park for HollyDay**, Sat., **May 15**, Holly Williams, county commissioner District 1, will be at Fox Run Regional Park from 11-1 p.m. Bring your lunch and walk and talk with Holly. Bring your concerns about the future of the park, traffic, and any other questions you might have for our commissioner for Northern El Paso County. For more information, contact marlene.brown@ocn.me
 - **Woodmoor Neighborhood Garage Sale**, Fri.-Sat., **Jun. 25-26**, 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Register as a seller by June 18 at woodmoorgaragesale.com. Claire Garlick (719) 332-8360.
 - **EPC Community Engage, "What Can Code Enforcement Do for You?"**, June 2021, online. Want to learn more about what El Paso County's Code Enforcement can do for you, what constitutes a violation, and how to submit a complaint? See https://planningdevelopment.elpasoco.com/epccommunityengage/.

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 or Our Community News, P.O. Box 1742, Monument, Colorado 80132.

Letters to Our Community

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

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

If you have not received an acknowledgement two days after your email submission or one week after you mailed your letter, please contact Jennifer Kaylor, Managing Editor, at (719) 488-3455 or editor@ocn.me. At OCN's sole discretion, we may ask you for clarification of your statements. Include references, such as website links, in your letter for any facts and figures you cite. OCN does not guarantee every letter will appear in print or on-line and does not guarantee a publication date. 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.

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 or (719) 488-3455 with any questions.

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Our Community News is a member of the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce. Visit the chamber at www.trilakeschamber.com



Support Our Community Advertise in OCN!

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

For advertising information, contact John Heiser, (719) 488-3455, ads@ocn.me, or visit www.ocn.me.

Look for our next issue Saturday, May 1

Ad space reservations due: **Fri., Apr. 9**
Finished ad artwork due: **Fri., Apr. 16**
Letters to the editor due: **Fri., Apr. 16**
Calendar items due: **Fri., Apr. 23**

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




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