

Donate live trees for Black Forest burn scar 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.

Mail theft prevention tactics

Residents are reporting they are finding mail, both open and unopened, strewn around the ground. Both community and individual mailboxes have been tampered with.

- Do not leave mail sitting in your mailbox overnight. Mail your outgoing mail at a postal annex. We understand this can be an inconvenience, but criminals are stealing whatever mail they can get their hands on.
- 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 as that can become very dangerous, but a cellphone picture is priceless to us when it comes to establishing potential suspect/s or vehicles.
- If you believe you were a victim of mail theft, please contact the El Paso County Sheriff's Office at 719-390-5555 and the postal inspector at 877-876-2455.

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

El Paso County Safe Streets Alliance

El Paso is one of the most rapidly growing of Colorado counties. With this growth comes increasing traffic volume and the potential for commuters to use our neighborhood streets to bypass congestion. El Paso County does not currently benefit from a program to use speed tables, chicanes, roundabouts and other calming measures to slow traffic speed and volume on neighborhood streets. There's an El Paso County proposal to extend Furrow Road South to Higby Road. Once this connection is made, the current traffic volume is forecasted to significantly increase. Three HOAs that border Furrow have formed the initial group to deal with the issues of this extension with the county. The group has created a working document and an El Paso Safe Streets Alliance petition at <https://ceds.org/epssa/>. The petition urges the county commissioners to expand traffic calming measures county-wide.

CDOT: stories of distracted driving victims

Distracted Driving continues to be a dangerous issue on Colorado roads. An average of 42 crashes a day involve a distracted driver, and the consequences can be truly life-changing. Please rethink your distracted driving behaviors and consider the reactions of those around you. "Every time I see a distracted driver, my first thought is to get as far away from them as possible," said Susan Dane, founder of Coloradans Organized for Responsible Driving (CORD). "My second thought is to ask: is it worth it? I lost two friends to a distracted driver, there's no reason for more lives to be lost due to distracted driving." Hear from the victims themselves at <https://www.codot.gov/safety/distracteddriving/victims>.

YMCA Outdoor Season Pool Pass

Monument Valley Pool, Prospect Lake Beach & Wilson Ranch Pool. Daily, monthly and season passes available. Find out more at ppymca.org/poolpass. See ad on page 6.

Monument Hill Foundation grants, apply by May 31

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 monumenthill-foundation.org (select "Apply for a Grant") See ad on page 3.

Sign up for Town of Monument notifications

The Notify Me feature on the town's website allows you to subscribe for topics such as emergency alerts, road

closures, weather, etc. Visit Notify Me on the website, www.townofmonument.org/list.aspx, and sign up for the topics that interest you.

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 is 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.

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/>.

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. 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

Openings for Monument's Planning Commission and Board of Adjustments

The Town of Monument has openings on its Planning Commission and Board of Adjustments. For more information, visit <http://townofmonument.org/261/Available-Board-Openings>.

MVEA Energy Star appliance and light bulb rebates

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

MVEA tree-trimming services

Tree trimming helps prevent storm-related power outages. For more information, call 800-388-9881 or 719-495-2283, or visit www.mvea.coop/tree-trimming.

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

NAMI's Connection Support Group provides weekly peer support for anyone with a mental health diagnosis. It is facilitated by people managing their own mental illnesses and structured to meet the diverse needs of those with depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and more. Connections meets Tuesdays, 7-8:30 p.m. You can fill out a new participant form at www.namicoloradosprings.org/connection-support-group.html. The weekly Family Support Group provides peer support for family members as their loved ones encounter the ups and downs that come with living with mental illness and working toward recovery. This group meets Thursdays, 7-8:30 p.m. For links to the above information and other groups, visit www.namicoloradosprings.org. Info: 719-473-8477, email info@namicos.org, or visit www.namicoloradosprings.org.

Silver Key senior citizen services

Connection Cafe's "Grab and Go" meal clients will receive three frozen meals for the week; meals must be requested in advance for the following week. A \$2.25 donation is requested. Please call 719-884-2300 to reserve your meal. Meals on Wheels and Home Delivered Meals will deliver frozen meals for the week to Monument on Wednesdays. If you qualify but are not yet enrolled for meals, phone 719-884-2300 or visit www.silverkey.org. 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 including Calls of Reassurance, 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>.

Free transportation and handyman services for seniors

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

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).

I-25 MyWay commuting options website

In another effort to improve traveler and worker safety along the 18-mile-long construction zone of Interstate 25 between Monument and Castle Rock, rush-hour travelers now can help maximize their commute time by taking advantage of I-25 MyWay, a new partnership between the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the Denver Regional Council of Governments. I-25 MyWay is offering transit, vanpool and carpool incentives to commuters willing to try a new mode of transportation between Colorado Springs and Denver. By taking more single-occupant vehicles off the road, it helps reduce congestion and enhances the environment. Commuters can learn more about eligibility and types of incentives at i25MyWay.org. The site will run through the end of construction in 2022.

Sign up for "Reverse 9-1-1" emergency notifications to your cell phones

The Emergency Notification System (powered by Everbridge), commonly referred to as Reverse 9-1-1, is a tool that can make rapid notifications to specific geographic areas to alert you to emergency situations including manmade disasters, evacuations, hazardous materials incidents, missing persons, and more. Reverse 9-1-1 is not the same as Amber Alerts, which are generated by a different system. You must register to receive emergency notifications on any phone other than your landline. You can list up to five locations and up to eight points of contact. Sign up at www.elpasoteller911.org.

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.

Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments

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.

Driver and vehicle services

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.

EPC Community Engage, "What Can Code Enforcement Do for You?"

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://planning-development.elpasoco.com/epccommunityengage/>.

May is Better Hearing & Speech Month

Be more aware of your hearing health. Visit A Better Hearing Center, 574 Hwy. 105 in May for a complimentary consultation and live-listening demonstration. www.abetterhearingcenter.com. See ad on page 7.