

Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District April 28, May 13, and 26

# Unification explored; storm after-action report; wildland apparatus proposed

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) board meeting on April 28, the board received the after-action report from the March snowstorm and a presentation for a wildland engine proposal. The district hosted a special meeting on May 13 with Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) to explore unification, and at the May 26 board meeting the board received an update on the unification process and a presentation on hazardous material decontamination policy. Numerous personnel were recognized at both regular board meetings.

**Note:** OCN was unable to publish a TLMFPD article in the May edition because printing occurred the day of the April 28 meeting. For meeting archive information from the April 28 meeting and the May 13 special meeting, see [www.tlmfire.org/board](http://www.tlmfire.org/board)

## Unification of districts explored

The TLMFPD board hosted a joint special meeting with the DWFPD board on May 13 to hear a presentation from attorney Emily Powell of Ireland Stapleton Law on the process and possible paths to a unification of the districts.

Powell outlined four possible approaches to unification with pros and cons for each. See the DWFPD article on page 21. The options can be viewed at [www.tlmfire.org/board](http://www.tlmfire.org/board).

At the May 26 board meeting, Fire Chief Andy Kovacs said that following board direction from May 13, he and DWFPD Interim Fire Chief Warren Jones had met with Emergency Services Consulting International of Wilsonville, Ore., on May 25 to discuss the scope of work needed to conduct a feasibility study for a potential unification. They also met on May 26 to develop a coordinated PowerPoint presentation for both boards. A forensic deep dive into the finances, salaries, and benefits of both agencies will be conducted, said Kovacs.

## Storm after-action report

Battalion Chief Mike Keough presented an after-action report on the March 13-15 snowstorm and said:

- Personnel and supervisors from all agencies represented worked together from the planning stages on March 11 through the after-action reviews to accomplish the incident objectives. See [www.ocn.me/v21n4.htm#tlmfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v21n4.htm#tlmfpd).
- The level of coordination and cooperation has been mentioned throughout the region and at state levels following the event as a future model for events in other areas.
- Some areas were identified for improvement and coordination, and the district has begun working to improve for future events.
- Battalion Chief Sean Pearson of DWFPD performed the work of three people at the incident command center.

## Staff recognition

Kovacs also said the following personnel were recognized on April 12 for their exemplary performance during the March 13-15 winter storm with a major incident ribbon: Deputy Chief Randy Trost, Division Chief Jamey Bumgarner, Division Chief Dean Wahl, Battalion Chief Kris Mola, Battalion Chief Mike Keough, Battalion Chief Jonathan Bradley, Lieutenants Kevin Richmond, Chris Keough, Mauricio Ayala, Mike Smith, Janaka Branden, Micah Coyle, and Franz Hankins; Engineers Matthew Edmunds, Braden Stoenner, Jody Thorpe, Aaron Wood, Adam Wakefield, and Morgan Cudney; Firefighter/Paramedics Keith Barker, Jeremy Furman, Dak Damour, and Derek Thorne; Paramedics Greg Lovato and Jonathon Hoeh; and Firefighters Hunter Ortuno, Alexander Armstrong, Rudi Gillette, Robert Horne, Tyler Ruona, Will Vogl, and Tyler Brickell.

Kovacs said he is both proud and honored to bestow the ribbons, and the staff can "Wear it proudly!"

Kovacs said paramedic Stephanie Soll and firefight-

Donald Wescott Fire Protection District special meetings May 13 and 17, regular meeting May 18

# Wescott board directs chief to pursue feasibility of merger with TLMFPD

By Allison Robenstein

Residents in the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) may see a merger with Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD). The Wescott board met with the TLMFPD board on May 13 to discuss options for a possible unification. On May 17, the board held an executive session to receive the advice of legal counsel, but no decisions were made.



**Above:** Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District's (TLMFPD) Chief Andy Kovacs and the executive team conducted an external stakeholder workshop on May 8 to get input on whether the district is serving the community in the way people expect. Representatives from the community included homeowners associations, public safety, local business owners, and philanthropy groups. Breakout Group Two was, from left, André Mouton, TLMFPD Division Chief of Community Risk Jamey Bumgarner, Randy Estes, Holly Brandon, and Robert Ginnett. Results of this discussion of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) will be combined with SWOT analyses from within the department and from the 2019 ESCI (Emergency Services Consulting International) Master Plan. The new Strategic Plan will be implemented by January 2022. See [www.tlmfire.org/transparency](http://www.tlmfire.org/transparency) (click Master Plan), [www.ocn.me/v19n5.htm#tlmfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v19n5.htm#tlmfpd). Photo by Jennifer Martin.

er Christian Schmidt have been recognized by the Plains to Peaks Emergency Medical and Trauma Service Region with the "Step Up" award for their performance in a childbirth emergency in July 2020. See [www.ocn.me/v21n2.htm#tlmfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v21n2.htm#tlmfpd).

## I-25 accident

On April 7, TLMFPD assisted the Larkspur Fire Protection District with an automobile accident involving fire on I-25 at Exit 167. A wrong-way driver was responsible for the accident that resulted in injuries and loss of life. Lt. Micah Coyle, engineer Mike Rauenzahn, and firefighter Hunter Ortuno performed professionally and did an outstanding job with "grace under pressure on a challenging call," said Kovacs.

## Wildland engine presentation

Keough also gave a presentation for an additional apparatus proposal and said:

- Every year, wildland fires are breaking records in state and nationally, and each fire is burning stronger with more conflagration.
- The department needs to keep on top of the potential for wildland fires with robust training, mitigation efforts, and good preparation to stay on the front end.
- TLMFPD's Wildland Committee recommends purchasing a Type 3 engine to increase response and deployment effectiveness to fires in the wildland-urban interface.
- The proposed Type 3 would be the safest engine for a four-person crew to respond with anywhere, and particularly on I-25 during winter weather.
- The district budgeted \$160,000 for a Type 6 engine this year, and the Wildland Committee requests the board consider an additional \$200,000 for the purchase of a Type 3 engine this year and defer the purchase of a replacement Type 6 engine until 2022.

Kovacs said the number one threat to the Tri-Lakes community is wildland fire, and the addition of a Type 3 engine to the fleet would serve the community well. Finalization of specifications for the tools and equipment for a Type 3 engine have been identified by the firefighters, and the district is awaiting pricing for those items for the 2022 budget year, said Kovacs.

The board will consider the proposal at a future meeting.



**Above:** Fire/Medic Derek Thorpe assists three members of St. Peter Cub Scout Pack 217 (L to R: Clayton Ryals, Stella Keough, and Pierce Ryals) in the assembly of the U.S. flag before the Pledge of Allegiance was held at the beginning of the "ground-breaking" ceremony for the Station 1 remodel on May 29. **Below:** Division Chief of Logistics Capt. Dean Wahl unveils the project announcement board at Station 1. The event was captured by TLMFPD's drone operated by Lt. Franz Hankins. Visual progress of the remodel will be posted periodically at [www.tlmfire.org](http://www.tlmfire.org). Completion of the remodel project is expected in October. Photos by Natalie Barszcz.



## Gross decontamination presentation

Battalion Chief of Training Jonathan Bradley explained how decontamination policies crews have adopted limit exposure to hazardous chemicals. He said reports about increased cancer rates throughout the fire service are cause for concern, and he reviewed the district's current procedures for decontamination from cancer-causing chemicals encountered during incidents. Bradley recognized Lt. Mo Ayala for writing the district policy for the decontamination process.

## Chief discusses structure fire

Kovacs said that during an electrical storm accompanied by hail, a Fox Run residential structure caught fire on April 27. He said mutual aid response really captured what it looks like to have a truly collaborative working relationship with all the agencies including DWFPD, BF-FRPD and the Colorado Springs Fire Department. He also mentioned:

- Lt. Chris Keough has been approved to act as a shift battalion chief.
- A remarkable amount of training hours occurred during March and April.
- The district is in search of a volunteer chaplain.
- As requested by Battalion Chief Kris Mola, the chief's report will be shared with line personnel after board meetings in the future.

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Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday of the month. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 23, at 6:30 p.m. at the Chamber of Commerce, 166 Second St., downtown Monument. For Zoom meeting instructions, minutes, and agendas, visit [www.tlmfire.org](http://www.tlmfire.org) or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

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