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once the study is complete. Jones said two major incidents in the past 60 days showed the smoothest operational response with inter-agency support that he has ever seen, and that co-operation already exists between DWFPD and TLMFPD. Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District also assisted at both incidents. The unification would result in a five-station district with a mobile unit and negate the need for a TLMFPD fourth station due to the south Monument border location of DWFPD's Station 1.

Kovacs said several TLMFPD administrative staff also assisted DWFPD recently with an internal lieutenant promotion process, and many co-operative efforts have been happening organically over the past few years.

The cost for the ESCI feasibility study is \$56,960 and will be split 50/50, as agreed by both boards, said Kovacs.

The board unanimously approved funding for the cost share for the ESCI study.

Property tax assessment rate reduction

Kovacs said Special District Association Executive Director, Ann Terry has provided the following information:

- Senate Bill 21-293 addresses property tax assessment rates by reducing some assessment rates for a short time (two years), and the Colorado House of Representatives passed the bill on June 8.
- The RAR of 7.15 % will be reduced to 6.95% for 2022 and 2023 for single-family residences.
- Nonpartisan staff at the Legislature estimate the loss of revenue for spe-

cial districts will be about 18.9% to 20% across the board.

- The real concern is the potential for a ballot initiative in November 2021 that will ask voters to permanently reduce tax assessment rates. That initiative would most likely include a non-residential (commercial) assessment rate reduction from 29% to 26.4%.
- "Colorado Rising," an advocacy group looking for opportunities to reduce taxes, is pushing for the reductions, and there is concern about the impact it might have on special districts.
- Executive Director Garry Briese of the Colorado State Fire Chief's Association has invited the groups to discuss the potential impacts on fire-fighting revenue.

Hildebrandt said Tri-Lakes residents gave the district permission to retain the current RAR at 7.15% after the vote to de-Gallagherize passed in November 2019. See www.ocn.me/v20n10.htm#tlmfpd.

Disaster averted

Treasurer John Hildebrandt thanked Kevin Barszcz for alerting 911 dispatch services to an escaped campfire in the Pikes Peak National Forest close to homes in the Red Rock/Mount Herman Roads area on the afternoon of June 15. Hildebrandt said living within about three-tenths to half a mile from the fire, it was in our back yard and it was disaster averted. TLMFPD crews ensured the fire was completely extinguished before turning the incident over to the U.S. Forest Service. Hildebrandt said he gave Barszcz a TLMF-

PD challenge coin at the scene for his actions.

TLMFPD reached out to recognize the timely action made by Barszcz before the board meeting, but the invitation was declined due to other commitments, said Kovacs.

Community risk

Division of Community Risk/Battalion Chief Jamey Bumgarner is participating in the planning meetings for the Northwest Passage Evacuation Drill, rescheduled for Oct. 2. The event is operated by the Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management. See www.ocn.me/v20n7.htm#tlmfpd.

Staff recognition

Kovacs recognized five individuals for "jobs well done" with the chief's coin award and said:

- Lt. Kevin Richmond was recognized for the completion of the SCBA project. Richmond did a fantastic job over a two-year period paying meticulous attention to detail in the procurement of state-of-the-art equipment for the entire district that required significant funding.
- District Administrative Officer Jennifer Martin was recognized for her exemplary work in the organization after her audit accounting practices were noted by Mitch Downs, the district auditor, for the best-ever demonstration of those controls.
- In May, Lt. Jon Bodinsky, engineer Keegan Black and firefighter Christian Schmidt were recognized for helping a homeless man suffering from electrolyte imbalances, living in a vehicle, and looking for work with his girlfriend. The couple had not eaten in days, and using their own funds, Bodinsky and Black purchased bananas, Snickers bars and Gatorade drinks from the Pilot Flying J travel center to help the couple.

Kovacs said the district will be issuing the lieutenants a credit card for emergency use that will be tracked, as suggested by Hildebrandt and Secretary Mike Smaldino.

Staff retirement

Kovacs said Chief of Logistics Capt. Dean Wahl has retired, and Deputy Chief Randy Trost has reverted to being both the operations and logistics chief for the next several weeks. A promotion opportunity for the position of operations chief has been advertised internally and, depending on the candidate selection, a cascade of promotions may be created within the district, said Kovacs.

Wildland fire personnel deployments

- Battalion Chief Mike Keough returned from a wildland deployment in Wyoming. He went on an operation for several days as a trainee and he returned certified as a

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