

Happy New Year! from the all-volunteer staff at



Our Community News

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

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Issue #251 — Volume 22 Number 1 — Saturday, January 1, 2022

Free

OCN needs your help! See page 28.

Local Events

Readers should assume that event information published in this issue is subject to change and information should be confirmed a day or two before the event by calling the information number or checking the organization's website.

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

- Monument Board of Trustees, Mon., Jan. 3, 17, 6:30 p.m.
- Woodmoor Water & Sanitation District Board, Mon., Jan. 10, 1 p.m.
- Tri-Lakes Wastewater Facility Joint Use Committee, Tue., Jan. 11, 10 a.m.
- D-38 DAAC, Tue., Jan. 11. 7-8:30 p.m.
- Palmer Lake Sanitation District Board, Wed., Jan. 12, 9 a.m.
- Monument Planning Commission, Wed., Jan. 12, 6 p.m.
- Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, Thu., Jan. 13, 27, 5 p.m.
- Monument Academy School Board, Thu., Jan. 13, 6 p.m.
- Donald Wescott Fire Protection District Board, Tue., Jan 18, 4 p.m.
- Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District Board, Wed., Jan 19, 7 p.m.
- Monument Sanitation District Board, Wed., Jan. 19, 9 a.m.
- Academy Water and Sanitation District Board, Wed., Jan. 19, 6 p.m.
- Palmer Lake Planning Commission, Wed., Jan. 19, 6 p.m.
- El Paso County Planning Commission, Thu., Jan. 20, 9 a.m.
- Triview Metropolitan District Board, Thu., Jan. 20, 5:30 p.m.
- Donala Water & Sanitation District Board, Thu., Jan. 20, 1:30 p.m.
- D-38 Board, Mon., Jan. 24, 6-10 p.m.
- Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District Board, Wed., Jan. 26, 6:30 p.m.
- Woodmoor Improvement Association Board, Wed., Jan. 26, 7 p.m.

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Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District and Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, Dec. 8

Historic fire district unification approved



Above: From left, DWFPD's Interim Fire Chief Warren Jones and board Chairman Mark Gunderman, and TLMFPD's board President John Hildebrandt and Fire Chief Andy Kovacs at the Monument Marketplace Clock Tower on Dec. 8. Photo courtesy of TLMFPD. **Right:** From left, TLMFPD Board Secretary Michael Smaldino and President John Hildebrandt, and DWFPD Chairman Mark Gunderman and Secretary Larry Schwarz sign the historic contract for services agreement in the Tri-Lakes Monument Administration Office board room on Dec. 8. Pictured in the background are Fire Chief Andy Kovacs and Interim Fire Chief Warren Jones. Those who witnessed the historic event included El Paso County Commissioner for District 1 Holly Williams, Monument Police Department Chief Sean Hemingway, Palmer Lake Fire Department Fire Chief Christopher McCarthy, board members, executive staff, and many firefighters from both districts, along with family members and friends, all. Photo by Natalie Barszcz.



By Natalie Barszcz
The Board of Directors of the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) held a special meeting on Dec. 8 to sign the historic Administrative and Operational Services Contract between Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District and Donald Wescott Fire Protection District. See TLMFPD and DWFPD articles on pages 4 and 6.
The TLMFPD Board of Directors are: President John Hildebrandt, Vice President Roger Lance, Treasurer Ja-

son Buckingham, Secretary Michael Smaldino, and Directors Tom Kelly, Terri Hayes, and Tom Tharnish.
The DWFPD Board of Directors are: Chairman Mark Gunderman, Treasurer Duane Garrett, Secretary Larry Schwarz, and Directors Charles Fleece and Joyce Hartung.
TLMFPD Fire Chief Andy Kovacs thanked everyone from both organizations for their support and said the TLMFPD president and the DWFPD chairman would take the first steps toward unification and sign an ad-

ministrative and operational services agreement contract that will begin on Jan. 1, 2022. "Though relatively new to the area, I have come to understand the historical significance of this event, and could not be more elated," Kovacs said. "Formalizing the relationship will better serve the community and both organizations for many years to come."
After the Pledge of Allegiance, Chaplain Greg Fell of the Monument Police Department led the large gathering in an invocation for the joining of
UNIFICATION (Cont. on 2)

Monument Academy School Board, Dec. 6 and 9

Monument Academy struggles with concerns about leadership



Above: At Monument Academy's Dec. 9 board meeting, nearly 100 parents, staff, teachers, and administrators attended to discuss concerns with leadership. MA's lawyer, one teacher, and five parents spoke during public comment. Board members made a group statement and shared a student's perspective, voting to hire a leadership consultant, review policies, and increase communication to get back on track. Photo by Jackie Burhans.

By Jackie Burhans
The Monument Academy (MA) School Board met twice in December. The first meeting was a lengthy executive session to discuss employment matters and administrators' performance. The regular meeting focused on addressing parents' and teachers' concerns with the leadership and organizational structure.

Employment and performance discussed in lengthy executive session
On Dec. 6, the Monument Academy board held a special meeting at the East Campus to adjourn into executive session "to receive legal advice regarding employment matters and to discuss the performance of East Campus administrators and central administrators." MA

lawyer Brad Miller and Chief Financial Officer Marc Brocklehurst attended.
Board President Ryan Graham, speaking to nearly a dozen attendees before the executive session, noted that the regular meeting would allow public comments, board discussion, and action items. The attendees remained in the otherwise empty meeting room for

MA (Cont. on 10)