

sized the need for homeowners to realize that wildfires are not just a concern for people who live among the trees. "Grass is one of the most dangerous fuels we have out there," because fire in tall grass spreads quickly and can generate enough heat to ignite your home. He recommends keeping the grass mowed in the 30 feet around your home. Other dangerous landscaping mistakes: flammable juniper bushes or oak bushes near your home, wood mulch or other combustible material against the foundation. "Go ahead and protect yourself, even if your neighbors haven't started on wildfire risk reduction yet." Ask for advice from local experts to identify risks in your property's home ignition zone.

Jim Reid, director of Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management, spoke of many resources available to residents including Peak Alerts Reverse 911. (<http://elspasoteller911.org>). He said it's vital to plan for emergencies and make sure all family members are informed of those plans.

Tri-Lakes Monument/Wescott Fire Protection District Chief Andy Kovacs spoke of the national civilian preparedness program Ready Set Go (RSG) and suggested that you can go to your local fire station for a copy of the RSG brochure or go online to www.wildlandfirersg.org/s/are-you-wildfire-ready. TLM/W FPD provided the "My Personal Wildland Fire Action Guide" distributed at the Wildfire Town Hall.

Tri-Lakes Monument/Wescott Division Chief of Community Risk Jamey Bumgarner reminded everyone that it's time to schedule a homeowners association slash chipping day to remove ladder fuel from under trees. Call (719) 484-0911 soon since chipping dates are filling up fast for 2022. Fire mitigation is key to saving your home in the event of a wildfire.

André Mouton and Lisa Hatfield of TLUMC EPG introduced a series of free classes, on Zoom starting Feb. 26 and then on Tuesday nights through May 3, on "Wildfire Neighborhood Ambassador" and how to coordinate "neighbors helping neighbors" wildfire risk reduction projects. Email them at epg@tlumc.org for more information and to sign up.

To see a recording of the Wildfire Town Hall, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R0f-mY9yL2E> or www.facebook.com/TLUMCEPG/videos/786749719388469.

To find out more about upcoming wildfire information events, contact your homeowners association or fire district.

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Right: Jim Reid, director of Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management, encouraged all residents to take responsibility for preparing "go-bags," for themselves and their pets, and making a family plan for evacuation. Resources include www.ready.gov/, www.fema.gov/media-collection/emergency-financial-first-aid-kit, and Peak Alerts Reverse 911 notification cell phone registration at <http://elspasoteller911.org/>.



Above: A Wildfire Town Hall meeting was held at Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church (TLUMC) on Jan. 19. Woodmoor Improvement Association teamed up with the TLUMC Emergency Preparedness Group to organize speakers from the Colorado State Forest Service, the Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management, and the Tri-Lakes Monument/Wescott Fire Protection District. About 150 people attended remotely or in person on this icy night, and many more have watched the recorded video since then. Photo by Sam Hastings, Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church.



Above: Andy Kovacs is the fire chief for the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, which has now merged with Donald Wescott Fire Protection District. His main message was for residents living in wildfire risk zones to prepare today using the Ready, Set, Go! program (RSG!). The program provides residents with an understanding of their wildland fire risk and actions individuals can take to reduce that risk. See www.wildlandfirersg.org/s/are-you-wildfire-ready? or visit your local fire station for a copy of the RSG! brochure.



Above: After the Marshall Fire burned entire communities, the phone at the Woodmoor Improvement Association started ringing. "Worried residents wanted to know if the same thing could happen here," Woodmoor Forestry Director Matthew Nelson said. Even though Woodmoor has been working to reduce its wildfire hazard for over 20 years, the size and intensity of the Marshall Fire frightened residents. "We began getting requests for a Town Hall meeting to address the wildfire hazard, and as the idea took shape we realized a regional meeting would be better than just one for Woodmoor residents." So, he spearheaded and moderated the town hall and operated the Zoom and Facebook Live connection with the help of Sam Hastings (not pictured) of Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church.



Above: Are there homes and whole communities in El Paso County that appear invulnerable but are really at risk? The answer from area wildfire experts is yes. "I've been doing wildfire mitigation for more than 20 years," said Dave Root, Colorado State Forest Service forester. "The hardest people to reach are those who live outside the trees. It doesn't occur to them that they are vulnerable or to ask for help." Contact your fire district or homeowners association for a free wildfire risk evaluation of your private property. Photos from Zoom by Lisa Hatfield.



Above: Building community through reducing wildfire risk is the theme of a "Wildfire Neighborhood Ambassador" class series coming this spring on Zoom brought to you by Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church Emergency Preparedness Group. Write to André Mouton, shown here, at epg@tlumc.org to find out more if you want to learn how to organize your neighbors to work together to reduce the fuels around houses and along egress routes.

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Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District, Jan. 19 Temporary board vacancy filled; tender purchase approved

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD) meeting on Jan. 19, the board approved a new director to fill the vacancy created by the passing of Director David Hoffpauir, approved the purchase of a new tender, and heard about the impacts of the neighboring districts' partial merger.

Board vacancy filled
Chairman Rick Nearhoff said Deborah Hoffpauir had requested she finish the board director term of her late husband

David Hoffpauir. Hearing no objection, Nearhoff administered the oath of office to Hoffpauir. The appointment will expire after the May 2022 election, said Nearhoff. 2022 directors' election update Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn said the May 22 board director election information will be available on the district website on Jan. 23. The self-nomination paperwork is available for pickup at Sta-