

additional fires had occurred. "The response was impressive, and it is nice to see everyone working together," said Smith.

**EMS update**

Langmaid said the following:

- In February, the district responded to 17 fire calls and two notable structure fires in neighboring districts, and 44 EMS requests.
- The American Medical Response (AMR) staffing shortages are impacting other El Paso County agencies, but the district has been relatively unaffected due to the Basic Life Support transport model the district has put in place, with CSFD providing an Advanced Life Support (ALS) paramedic.
- The district has not seen an increase in calls from AMR due to its preference of contacting districts with ALS, and because of that, AMR would rather use TLMFPD, Falcon and Security Fire Departments, to avoid the costly fines imposed by Colorado Springs.

**Financial report**

Hinton said the district had about \$1.26 million (includes general operating funds, the reserve funds, and the TABOR fund) at the end of February. The district only used 13% of the annual budget year to date, due to the spending moratorium that had been in place since November, and the district has received about \$1.472 million in total tax revenue

year to date, said Hinton.

The board unanimously accepted the financial report as presented.

Langmaid said the spending moratorium is over, and the district received \$14,340 in Ambulance Revenue for February.

**Chief's report**

Langmaid said the following:

- The district purchased tires for \$3,086 to begin building an available cache for apparatus and ambulances.
- The district received the ordered bunker gear, some slightly used portable radios, and the mobile dispatch consoles that were ordered in summer 2021, but supply chain issues persist.
- Overhead door repairs were completed at Station 1, and the board approved water drainage project began at Station 2. See [www.ocn.me/v21n9.htm#bffrpd](http://www.ocn.me/v21n9.htm#bffrpd) and [www.ocn.me/v21n10.htm#bffrpd](http://www.ocn.me/v21n10.htm#bffrpd).
- A welder has been contacted to install safety equipment in the training facility.
- A 10,000-gallon cistern was approved and tested on Bridle Bit Road.
- Training hours were well above the minimum for a total of about 1,187 hours in February.

Dowden said, "Kudos to the staff for putting out the great videos on the district and social media websites, they are really impressive."

**Honor guard appreciated**

Nearhoof read a thank you note from Director Deb Hoffpaur that stated she would be forever grateful to the department for providing the honor guard at the "Celebration of Life" service for her late husband Director David Hoffpaur and his brother Bud Hoffpaur.

**Executive session**

The board moved into executive session at 7:23 p.m., pursuant to Colorado Revised Statute 24-6-402(4)(d), to discuss specialized details of security arrangements. Langmaid confirmed to OCN that no decisions or motions were approved after returning to the regular session at 8:11 p.m.

The board adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

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Meetings are usually held on the third Wednesday of every month at Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. Meetings are open to the public in person and via Zoom. The next regular meeting is scheduled for April 20 at 7 p.m. For joining instructions, updates, agendas, and minutes, visit [www.bffire.org](http://www.bffire.org) or contact the Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn at [admin@bffire.org](mailto:admin@bffire.org) or call 719-495-4300.

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*Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, March 30*

**Board meeting too late for publication**

*By Natalie Barszcz*

The Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) held its board meeting on March 30, after Our Community News had been printed. See the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District article on page 16.

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Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday of the month. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 27 at 6:30 p.m. at TLMFPD Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. For Zoom meeting instructions, agendas, minutes, and up-

dates, visit [www.tlmfire.org](http://www.tlmfire.org) or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

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*El Paso Board of County Commissioners, March 8, 15, and 22*

**Minor subdivision approved in Black Forest; beetle infestation treatment in The Pineries Open Space draws concern**

*By Helen Walklett*

During March, the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approved a minor subdivision request which will see a Black Forest property split into three lots and heard concerns from a local resident about the contract to treat a mountain pine beetle infestation in The Pineries Open Space. It also approved the memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the 2022 Black Forest slash and mulch program and made decisions associated with the Beacon Lite Road and County Line Road Improvements Project.

**Black Forest minor subdivision**

At the March 15 BOCC land use meeting, the commissioners voted unanimously to approve a request by Jerry and Sharon Lomax for a minor subdivision application to create three single-family residential lots on their 15.18-acre property in Black Forest, which is zoned RR-5 (residential rural). The property is located along the north side of Burgess Road at the northernmost terminus of Green Acres Lane, about one mile northeast of the intersection of Burgess Road and Volmer Road. The subdivision will be known as Treasured Acres.

One of the lots will have direct access to Green Acres Lane, which is an existing private road; the other two lots will have access to Green Acres via an access easement. This required the commissioners to approve a waiver to allow for two lots to be created without having access and 30 feet of frontage along a public road. Each lot will be just over 5 acres, and the existing dwelling will remain on what will become Lot 1. The applicants are not proposing to construct any new buildings at this time.

The application was considered as a consent item, meaning there was no discussion. It was heard at the Planning Commission meeting on March 3 where the commissioners voted unanimously to recommend it for approval.

**The Pineries mountain beetle infestation**

At the March 8 meeting, Judy von Ahlefeldt, a long-time resident of Black Forest, raised concerns about a mountain pine beetle infestation in 277 trees in The Pineries Open Space in Black Forest and the method by which it is being treated. The county signed a contract for \$42,600 in February to have the affected trees masticated. The contract did not come before the BOCC for approval because the sum involved was below the required threshold.

Von Ahlefeldt said, "The contract for this project to treat the mountain pine beetles, it's called a treatment, not a removal, because a removal is you cut the tree down and you take it away. This is grinding it up in place and grinding everything else up with it that's in that general area, so we have huge areas of piles of mastication debris in The Pineries Open Space." She continued, "I have a fundamental problem as a conservationist and someone that's worked with this for a long time, of bringing heavy equipment into this area. I think it's inappropriate when there are other and less expensive options that are more effective."

This open space is unusual among county properties in that it has two conservation easements on it totaling 1,040 acres, which are held by the Palmer Land Trust. Von Ahlefeldt said, "The buffers I was told were in place have been violated."

Von Ahlefeldt first brought her concerns to the commissioners' attention in February shortly after the county had signed the contract. At that time, she said the biggest problem was the fact that mastication was to be used, which is not an approved way to get rid of pine beetles and is also very impactful.

Work began in early March and was expected to take three weeks. The Pineries Open Space is on Volmer Road north of the intersection of Volmer and Shoup Roads in an area of Black Forest extremely damaged by the 2013 fire. It totals 1,070

acres and opened to the public in June 2020.

**Black Forest slash and mulch program**

At its March 22 meeting, the BOCC approved the 2022 MOU with the Black Forest Slash and Mulch Committee (SAMCOM), the nonprofit responsible for the program's daily operation.

This wildfire mitigation program, which is staffed entirely by volunteers, accepts slash (tree debris including branches, leaves, needles, etc.) from residents that is ground into mulch, which is available free of charge to the public. Educational programs and events provide information to the public about forest health, soil conservation, safe chainsaw use, noxious weeds, and forest pests.

Under the MOU, the county contributes \$35,000 toward grinder expenses, and SAMCOM provides \$10,000 toward the costs. The details of the agreement are unchanged from those of 2021.

The site, at the southeast corner of Shoup and Herring Roads, plans to open for the 2022 season for slash drop-off on April 30. Normal business hours will be Saturdays 7 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sundays noon-4 p.m., and Tuesday and Thursday evenings 5-7:30 p.m. The last date for slash drop-off is Sept. 11. There is a \$2 drop-off fee for slash with a loyalty card available that offers a discount.

Free mulch will be available for self-loading from May 14 through Sept. 17. For large quantities of mulch, an end loader will be available on Satur-

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