

Our Community News

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



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Issue #259 — Volume 22 Number 9 — Saturday, September 3, 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.

- **Ann Shimek ceramic art retrospective**, reception Fri., Sep 2, 5-8 pm; Exhibit open Sat., Sep. 3, 12-8 pm.
- **Fox Run Regional Park Free Concert**, Thu. Sep. 8, 6 - 8 pm.
- **Jackson Creek Senior Living Hawaiian Luau**, Fri., Sep. 9, 4-6:15 pm
- **9/11 Memorial ceremony**, Sun., Sep. 11, 6:40 am
- **Black Forest slash/mulch site drop-offs end**, Sun., Sep. 11
- **The Last 2022 Monument Art Hop**, Thu., Sep. 15, 5-8 pm. See ad on page 2.
- **Baptist Road Dental, Dr. Hill open house**, Fri. Sep. 16, 4 pm-7 pm. See ad on page 11.
- **Native American Sacred Trees and Places Annual Meeting and Conference**, Fri.-Sun., Sep. 23-25.
- **Pikes Peak Brewing Company Oktoberfest**, Sat., Sep. 24, 11 am-11 pm. See ad on page 2.
- **Creek Week Clean-Up**, Sun., Sep. 25, 9 am,
- **Our Community News mailing day**, Thu., Sep. 29, approx. 9 am-2 pm. Information on page 28.
- **Take a Kid Mountain Biking Day**, Sat., Oct. 1, 9 am
- **Grow your business workshop**, Wed., Oct. 5, 8:30 am-3 pm. See ad on page 5.
- **Water Lantern Festival at Fox Run Park**, Sat., Oct. 8, 4:30-8:30pm
- **Empty bowls dinner and silent auction**, Wed., Oct. 12, 5-7:30 pm See ad on page 14.

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Burney Sisters at TLCA, Aug. 20



Above: On Aug. 20, the multi-talented Burney Sisters brought their eclectic style of music to the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA) stage. The Columbia, MO-based trio of Bella, Olivia, and Emma demonstrated vocal range, complementary harmony, and musical talents seemingly well beyond their age. Olivia is the oldest at 17. Playing a mix of their originals and covers from influences such as The Staves, the variety of instruments played during the evening included electric bass, electric and acoustic guitar, cello, keyboard, and fiddle. That variety led to the diversity of song genres—bluegrass, folk rock, Indie and infusions of classical and punk. Olivia said, “We have traveled the U.S. and play anywhere that will have us.” The TLCA audience must have felt very fortunate that this was one of their stops, awarding the sisters a standing ovation at the close of their performance. *Photo By David Futey.*

Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education, Aug. 22

Board approves wording of property tax ballot initiative, recognizes staff

By Harriet Halbig

The Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education discussed and approved wording of a ballot initiative to increase property taxes solely to improve compensation of teachers and non-administrative staff at its Aug. 22 meeting.

Chief Business Officer Brett Ridgway presented background information in support of the initiative. A recent market study ascertained that teachers and hourly employees in the district are compensated 10% less than the regional average and of the 11 districts compared in the study, D38 offers the lowest starting pay.

The 6% raise given staff at the end of last year does not close the gap, as this amount was provided to all districts in the state.

Ridgway explained that the funding

formula used by the state favors districts with declining enrollment, a large English Language Learner population, and a large population that qualifies for free or reduced lunches. Consequently, the per-pupil revenue provided to D38 is among the lowest in the state.

The proposed mill levy override would provide 7.45 mills to the district. The 1999 override was for a fixed dollar amount which has since lost over 40% of its value due to inflation and rising home values.

The proposed override would provide about \$5.6 million annually to the district's general fund and \$1 million to Monument Academy. This translates to an additional \$258.89 per year for a home valued at \$500,000.

The new revenue is expressly and solely to improve compensation for

teachers and non-administrative staff. Expenditures will be monitored by a citizens' Financial Advisory Committee, which will report to the Board of Education.

Ridgway said the funds from the mill levy override would be listed separately in his monthly financial reports so that it is easy to monitor their use.

Several individuals offered their opinions during the public comment segment of the meeting. All were in favor of the initiative. Some of the opinions involved the effect of increasing turnover among staff and the feeling of insecurity it brings to students. Others said that it is unacceptable that the district's paraprofessionals are earning less than employees at McDonald's. Others expressed the fear that the district will lower its hiring

D38 BOE (Cont. on 2)

Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, Aug. 11 and 25

Elephant Rock developer chosen; cannabis and mill levy questions go to voters

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

In August, the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees decided three issues that they have discussed with the community for months: They chose a developer for the Elephant Rock property, they finalized language for a ballot initiative putting the question of retail sales of adult use cannabis before the voters, and they completed a ballot initiative requesting a mill levy increase.

The Aug. 11 meeting ended with an executive session.

The Carter Payne gets the nod

At the Aug. 25 meeting, the board voted to move forward with the proposal presented by The Carter Payne to develop the Elephant Rock property that the town acquired from the Living Word church.

Mayor Bill Bass asked the board to give the staff direction on proceeding with the proposals from The Carter Payne; Duncan Bremer, Matt Dunston, and JW Roth; and Richard and Lindsay Willan. The three proposals were reported in *Our Community News* here: <https://ocn.me/v22n8.htm#plbt>. The financial aspects of the plans were presented in a workshop meeting that can be viewed on page 8.

The Carter Payne vision included dining, outdoor activities, community gardens, a brewery, and spaces for artists.

Trustee Glant Havenar started the discussion by saying she was ready to have an agreement in principle with one developer. Trustee Samantha Padgett

PALMER LAKE (Cont. on 6)