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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 21-23 for event locations and other details of these and many other local events.

- Black Forest Arts and Crafts Guild Show & Sale, Wed.-Sun., Nov. 1-5.
- OCN mailing days, Thu., Nov. 2 & Nov. 30, approx. 9 am-2 pm.
- Downtown Monument Holiday Open House, Fri.-Sat., Nov. 3-4, 11 am-4 pm. See ad on page 2.
- A Christmas Shop at the Monastery, Sun., Nov. 5-Fri., Dec. 1. See ad on page 3.
- Palmer Lake Historical Society, Thu., Nov. 16, 7 pm.
- Eric Elison, Gordon Lightfoot Tribute, Fri., Nov. 17, 7-9 pm. Colorado Springs. See ad on page 4.
- TLWC's Joys of the Season Holiday Home Tour, Fri.-Sat., Nov. 17-18, 10 am-4 pm. See ad on page 2.
- International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day, Sat., Nov. 18.
- Alpaca Holiday Extravaganza, Sat., Nov. 18, 9 am-5 pm, Sun., Nov. 19, 10 am-4 pm. See ad on page 7.
- Monumental Impact Community Technology & Engineering Networking Meeting, Sat., Nov. 18, 9 am-10 am. See ad on page 5.
- MITEE Gobble Squabble: A Technology & Engineering Exhibition presented by D38's Bearbotics, Sat., Nov. 18, 10 am-5 pm. See ad on page 5.
- YMCA 5K race series: Turkey trot, Thu., Nov. 23. See ad on page 6.
- Downtown Monument Black Friday, Nov. 24, 10 am-5 pm. See ad on page 2.
- Downtown Monument Small Business Saturday, Nov. 25, 10 am-5 pm. See ad on page 2.
- Book signing, To Melt a Snowdrift, by Lisa Hatfield, Sat., Nov. 25, 11 am-2 pm. See ad on page 5.
- Eagle Wine and Spirits Paws N Hooves Fundraiser, Fri., Dec. 1, 6-8 pm. See ad on page 2.
- Downtown Monument Small Town Christmas, Sat., Dec. 2, 10 am-4 pm. See ad on page 2.
- Kiwanis 17th Annual North Pole Craft Show, Sat., Dec. 2, 9 am-4 pm. See ad on page 9.
- Monument Tree Lighting, Sat., Dec. 2, 5 pm. See ad on page 2.
- S'more Holiday Fun at Fox Run Park, Sat., Dec. 9, 1-3 pm. See ad on page 5.
- Monument Sunday with Santa, Dec. 10, 11 am-4 pm. See ad on page 2.
- A Time to Dance: Believe, dance performance, Mon., Dec. 18, 6 pm. See ad on page 4.

In this issue

D38 News 1-7
Water & San District News 1, 8-10
Fire District News 10-12
Monument News 12, 14
Palmer Lake News 14-15
County News 15-16
WIA News 16
Weather 16
Letters and Columns 16-18
Snapshots 18-21
Notices and Calendar 21-23
OCN Information 1, 21, 23

Circulation
Print Run: 23,480
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Stacks: 746

Mount Herman fire averted



Above: While hiking on Mount Herman Oct. 22, Steve Galchutt of Monument, found a smoldering campfire pit and called 911 which forwarded his information to the U.S. Forest Service. Two firefighters from Wildland Fire Module Unit 9 extinguished the campfire by pouring several gallons of water on it. *Photo by Steve Galchutt.* **Right:** Pictured from the left to right are Nick Boling, Galchutt, and Aidan Kuelling. *Photo by Bailey White.*



By Steve Pate

Smokey the Bear says, "Only you can prevent forest fires." In this case, Steve Galchutt and a crew from the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) prevented what could have been a major disaster on Mount Herman on Oct. 22. Galchutt's hike up Mount Herman that day turned into a wildfire prevention event. After reaching the summit, Galchutt sat on his usual log to have lunch. While eating his sandwich and enjoying the view, he smelled smoke. The smoke led him to a smoldering illegal campfire that had been fanned back to life by gusty winds. He pulled out a flaming log and broke it up and poured the remainder of his drinking water on the fire. This campfire was still very much

alive and needed to be doused with much more water.

Galchutt called 911, the appropriate emergency action when fire is spotted in our forests. The 911 operator put him in touch with USFS, which sent a crew up Mount Herman. Galchutt's location coordinates did not get passed on to the Hot Shot crew. They called him from the trailhead and again near the summit to confirm his location. He was not visible and told them to listen for him playing When the Saints Go Marching In on his harmonica. Following that sound, the "Saints" came marching in with water and doused the remains of the fire.

Steve Pate may be contacted at StevePate@ocn.me.

Triview Metropolitan District, Oct. 19 Traffic safety concerns; NDS pipeline nears completion

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Triview Metropolitan District (TMD) meeting on Oct. 19, the board heard about measures to enhance traffic safety measures along Gleneagle Drive, received an update on the Northern Delivery System (NDS) pipeline project, heard about an addition to an existing loan, and held an executive session to discuss water supply contracts, property acquisitions, strategic planning, and change cases.

Director Jason Gross was excused.

Traffic safety measures enhanced

Ann-Marie Jojola, president of the Promontory Pointe Homeowners Association, thanked the board and the district for the traffic study conducted in the Promontory Pointe neighborhood along Gleneagle Drive. The study will help alleviate a lot of the questions about speed for the residents, she said.

District Manager James McGrady said the district is making changes after the study revealed that motorists were travelling through the neighborhood a few miles over the posted speed limit of 30 miles per hour. The district will change the speed limit to 25 mph near the Little Train Park and through the curved areas from Kansas Pacific Court down to Baptist Road. The straight areas will be 30 mph. A split-rail fence will be installed along the east and south sides of the park to prevent children chasing after balls down Gleneagle Drive. An additional number of crosswalk reminder signs will also be installed, making safety improvements and signs that make sense for the road conditions, he said.

NDS update

McGrady said the Kiewit team installing the NDS pipeline would be wrapping up the installation project along

D38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee, Oct. 10 Committee hears updates on Consent Task Force, D38 Education Foundation

By Harriet Halbig

The D38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee (formerly District Accountability Advisory Committee) received updates from various initiatives and subcommittees at its Oct. 10 meeting at Palmer Lake Elementary School.

School presentation

Following a tour of the Palmer Lake Elementary School, Principal Peggy Griebenow gave a brief presentation on the history and demographics of the school.

Griebenow is the third principal since 1986, leading a school with a student count of 385.

Each student has an address to receive any communication within the school. Three postmasters distribute the mail.

The school's literacy program is based on the study of science and most of the English language learners at present are Hispanic.

The school was built in three sections over time.

Consent Task Force report

Board of Education President Tiffiney Upchurch presented a detailed report on the activities of the Consent Task Force formed in December 2021 and consisting of students and recent alumni, parents, community members, counselors, high school principals, district administration, and members of the Board of Education.

Results of their collaborations have been presented to students during the 2022-23 schoolyear during freshman and sophomore study halls at Lewis-Palmer High School and PE classes at Lewis-Palmer Middle School. The task force agreed that parents should be offered the opportunity for students to opt out of attending these sessions. If they choose not to opt out, parents will have access to the materials being taught.

The task force has developed a detailed program ranging from pre-K to high school, offering age-appropriate information regarding the definition of consent to younger children, peer pressure and boundaries for middle schoolers, and legal definitions of sexual harassment and reporting capability for older students.

At each level, titles of applicable books will also be offered.

Classes will be taught by trained teachers, counselors, and school resource officers.

The task force listed district policies which have relevance to consent and delineated ways in which district policies could be presented on the website to make it easy to find them by subject. The task force encouraged the district to word the policies in easy-to-understand ways and provide any reporting documents with the appropriate policies.

Applicable policies will be read and clarified at board meetings early in 2024.

The task force also encouraged the district to offer training to teachers twice each year on the subject.

D38 Education Foundation report

Executive Director Stephanie Palzkill reported on the reactivation of the D38 Education Foundation, originally founded in 1994.

The foundation was active until 2009 and has since been dormant, although the district has been maintaining all necessary tax and other paperwork with the state to remain official as a nonprofit organization.

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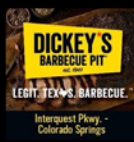
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bers of the Board of Trustees of the
group, which includes representatives
of the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Com-
merce and the Monument Hill Ki-
wanis Club in addition to members
with backgrounds in cybersecurity and
digital strategy. Upchurch serves as a
representative of the board, and Super-
intendent KC Somers is an ex-officio
non-voting member.All of the Board of Trustees and
administrative officers serve as volun-
teers.Palzkill is the executive director
and Crystal Lopez serves as bookkeep-
er.Palzkill explained that the foun-
dation strives to elevate education
through community connection and
champion educators to strengthen dis-


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DECEMBER
SMALL TOWN CHRISTMAS: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2, 10 AM - 4 PM
NORTH POLE AT TRI-LAKES CRAFT SHOW: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2, 9 AM - 4 PM
TREE LIGHTING: SATURDAY DECEMBER 2, 5 PM
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district performance to remain in the top tier of schools in the state.

The foundation does not compete with other entities seeking funding for the district such as the Tri-Lakes Women's Club and Mountain Hill Kiwanis but will seek financial support from individuals and corporations.

The foundation will administer grant funding to educators. The Inspire grant program fosters creativity among individual educators while the Advance grant program supports professional education.

With the funds remaining in the foundation budget from 2009, the Inspire grant will be awarded in early 2024. A "road show" familiarized staff with the grant, and applications are due Nov.30.

Plans will include fundraisers in 2024.

There will be a newsletter for contributors in the coming months.

For further information, please see the October Parent and Community Advisory Committee article at <https://www.ocn.me/v23n10.htm#d38-pcac>.

Portrait of a Graduate/ Educator report

Secondary Program Coordinator Jessica McAllister presented the final graphic presentations of the Portrait of a D38 Graduate and Portrait of a D38 Educator.

This initiative, begun in summer 2022, seeks to specify the cognitive, personal, and interpersonal competencies needed for success after high school graduation. Students were asked what success would look like, and industry

representatives were asked what skill sets were sought in potential employees.

The Portrait of a Graduate/Educator Committee was then asked to discuss what advice they would offer to themselves as high school students.

One response was to be made aware of the variety of careers available. It was suggested that the district have a career fair including a variety of professions in the community and to more widely promote the assistance of guidance counselors.

For more detailed information on this initiative, please see the website www.lewispalmer.org and the October issue under family resources, meeting content, District Accountability Advisory Committee, Sept. 18 meeting.

Board of Education update

Board liaison Upchurch reminded members of the upcoming election for board members, only one of which includes more than one candidate. Individuals may see the district website for information on the candidates. (www.lewispalmer.org/page/november-2023-election-information).

Upchurch also reported that three of the initiatives proposed by the district for inclusion in the 2024 legislative session were approved by the Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB). These include confirmation of local control of curriculum, state buying down of the budget stabilization factor (details proportional reduction of total funding of each district beginning in 2009), which deprived

funding to the schools for several years, and not bringing back the budget stabilization factor.

Committee reports

Assistant Superintendent Amber Whetstone reported that the membership of the Financial Transparency Committee will be approved by the Board of Education at its Oct. 23 meeting.

Stacey Barr, director of Nutrition Services, has application forms for those wishing to serve on the Wellness Committee. The focus of the committee is to investigate state regulations as apply to the district.

Assessment and Accountability Coordinator Dr. Michael Brom reported on the activities of the Staff Collaboration Committee, saying that hiring went well during the summer and that substitute requests were filled 85% of the time. The Calendar Committee

submitted a potential school calendar for four-day weeks and asked that this information be provided to all staff at each building before asking for approval. If approved overwhelmingly and staff indicates the intention to remain with the district, the committee will move forward with board approval of the calendar.

The Special Education Advisory Committee and Gifted Education Leadership Team have not yet met.

The Parent and Community Advisory Committee meets six times a year, usually on the second Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m. Locations vary. Due to the Nov. 7 election, the November meeting will be held on Nov. 14 at the Monument Academy west campus, 1150 Village Ridge Pt. For information, please contact tmckee@lewispalmer.org.

Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me.

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Monument Academy School Board, Oct. 5 and 26

Enrollment shortfall causes budget challenges

By Jackie Burhans

The Monument Academy (MA) School Board met twice in October. In both sessions, they reviewed the finances, including the 2023-24 budget, and explored the challenges caused by lower than projected enrollment. The board also continued to discuss the employee handbook and leave

policies. Finally, the board heard committee reports from board members and spotlighted its science teacher.

Budget challenges explored

At the Oct. 5 meeting, financial consultant Glenn Gustafson reported on the September financial statements and reviewed the fund accounts. He

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the future. Gustafson noted that enrollment was 116.5 below budgeted projections but only 4.5 below last year's enrollment, so essentially flat. Interim Chief Operating Officer Kim McClelland said while it wasn't possible to forecast with 100% accuracy, in March MA had looked at the currently enrolled students, families who had indicated an intent to return, and seats that had been offered and accepted.

MA estimated 1,022 returning students plus 184 seat offers for a total of 1,206. By April, returning was 1,016 plus 186 seat offers for a total of 1,202. The proposed budget was submitted in April, she said, but by May 31, the returning students dropped by 23 to 992, and the number of seat offers increased by four for a total of 1,187 students. By August, the number of returning students had dropped to 930, down by 62. McClelland said that when MA noticed the drop, it decided not to hire staff. They had originally thought they'd end up with five classes in each of three grade levels. At this point, she said, the registrars stopped offering seats going over the policy on student-teacher ratio. When they opened offers again, they only got two of the 13 potential students. The board explored different ways to market the school, keep parents engaged, and change registration processes in the future.

Board President Ryan Graham noted that from March to August, elementary had the biggest drop of 55 students, with middle school down 16 and high school down 17. McClelland said the registrars sent out a survey to families of students who did not enroll. The biggest reason was that families chose to homeschool their kids; some left due to program opportunities and school environment; and a few families had moved. McClelland said she would like to see a history of returning student rates and conversion rates and timeframes. Board Vice President Lindsay Clinton said she did not see the trend of homeschooling changing and had discussed with Graham whether MA could create a homeschool program.

McClelland said it takes time to put together a homeschool program but could come together for the next fall with a dedicated person to get the program going. She would need to know where to pull from the budget and where to find the space to run the program, noting that closes off the use of that space for students who bring in full PPR. She noted that six months might be feasible but not for a full K-12 homeschool program, and it might take three years to build out fully. The board, she said, would need to decide if it needed the program to break even initially

or whether it could sustain a loss due to the start-up costs. Graham noted that almost 5% of MA's enrollment left for homeschooling.

Gustafson reiterated that MA needed to reduce its budget to match the loss in revenue. He mentioned that, due to the budgeted revenue expectations, the staff had been given a larger-than-normal pay raise and that he expected it to be lower next year. He also said he would add the SPED funding MA had received along with \$220,000 in fundraising, which he had hoped not to depend on. After going through the budget line by line with the leadership team, they came up with a portion of what is needed to bring the budget into balance but are still \$311,000 short. The plan is to increase revenue, cut staff and other expenses, and legally reallocate as many expenses as possible from East to West Campus. He said they would save money from staff vacancies, pursue grant opportunities, and optimize interest income. The ERTC money would save MA's bacon this year, but it would still need to solve the budget issues for next year. Graham proposed to have the Finance Committee review

the budget and asked if they could push the budget approval from the Nov. 9 meeting to the December meeting to have more time. Gustafson agreed so long as the leadership team understands they cannot spend the money shown in the current budget. McClelland said that MA is under a spending freeze. The deadline for the budget is Jan. 31, 2024.

Clinton raised the issue of the \$29 million balloon payment due on the East Campus bonds in May 2026. She said that MA had been discussing for two years the goal of presenting as attractive a package as possible to refinance the bonds. Gustafson said that if MA were to refinance right now, the annual debt service would require a cut in the budget. He is looking into the interest rate outlook and noted that Cesar Chavez charter school had a similar problem. He told Lundeen that there would be a charter school crisis if the

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Above: At the Oct 23 school board meeting, the D38 recognized American Legion Tri-Lakes Post 9-11 for their work educating the next generation on the United States Constitution, American democracy, and patriotism by having veterans in the classroom. The American Legion also raises funds for high school student scholarships and sponsors high school juniors to attend the American League Auxiliary summer leadership programs. From left are board member Kris Norris, student representative Kaia of Palmer Ridge High School (PRHS), board vice president Theres Phillips, student representative David of PRHS, John Russell, Mike Christensen, Terry Carver, and Randy Fritz of the American Legion, and board president Tiffney Upchurch, board member Matt Clawson, Assistant Superintendent Amber Whetstine and board member Ron Schwarz. *Photo by Jackie Burhans*

dividual school level.

Board Treasurer Ron Schwarz requested that Ridgway determine whether the decline is a trend regionally and nationwide. He suggested discussing the issue with the district’s demographer.

Ridgway said there was growth in enrollment the previous year, but it was less than anticipated.

Ridgway said that funds from the Universal Prekindergarten program are more robust than the previous use of tuition and limited state funding.

He said he is working with state legislators to achieve a more consistent cash flow over the course of the year. Currently, funding from taxes is not received until spring, requiring that the district maintain sufficient cash to fund its commitments early in the year.

Ridgway introduced the board to a new graphic to monitor utility expenses and how they are affected by the Schneider Electric contract. Water, electricity, and gas will be monitored separately and expenditures back to the 2018-19 school year will be included for comparison. Actual and budget

numbers will be included.

Asked whether there is a guarantee of results from Schneider Electric, Ridgway responded that there is a guaranteed recovery in the agreement.

The board approved revisions to a policy regarding support staff vacations and holidays.

Board President Tiffney Upchurch asked about an item in the consent agenda regarding a contract with Schmidt Construction at the middle school.

Executive Director of Operations and Development Chris Coulter responded that the construction at the middle school is in response to the dangerous traffic pattern resulting from buses, cars, and pedestrians accessing the same area of the lower parking lot. This construction will involve repaving and developing the upper level lot for buses only.

The board approved the consent agenda.

One student and one community member made public comments regarding the district’s treatment of transgender students. They stressed

that all students should be treated with equal regard and respect and that the current situation results in unnecessary stress and sometimes results in suicide.

Student representatives

The board welcomed two student representatives from Palmer Ridge High School. Senior Kaya Kimmey and sophomore David Gallaga were seated with the board and encouraged to enter discussions on reports and initiatives. The students are non-voting members and are responsible for sharing information with their student bodies.

Students from the two high schools will alternate attendance monthly to see how local government works.

American Legion recognition

The board recognized American Legion Tri-Lakes Post 9-11 for its efforts to educate students about the Constitution. Veterans visited classrooms, discussed the Constitution, and answered students’ questions.

Vice Commander Terri Carver said it was encouraging that students got involved in the instruction and that the post has obtained 500 pocket Constitutions for distribution.

The American Legion also encourages high school juniors to apply to attend Boys State and Girls State during the summer.

Post member John Russell, action officer for Boys State, asked to meet with guidance counselors to promote attendance at Boys State and Girls State.

The Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education usually meets at 6 p.m. on the third Monday of the month. Due the school closures for Thanksgiving break, the November meeting will be on Nov. 27 at the district’s learning center, 146 Jefferson St. in Monument. For further information, contact vwood@lewis-palmer.org.

Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me.

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TRIVIEW (Cont. from 1)

Rollercoaster and Northgate Road by the end of October. Milling and paving has begun at the north end of Rollercoaster Road, and the overlay is expected to be completed before winter. After completion of the pipeline installation, Kiewit will install a pipeline to the Conexus development for \$200,000. The pipeline to segment D (future Conexus development) is part of the NDS and it is hoped the installation will move the Conexus development forward. The pipeline will end about 200 feet from the Town of Monuments municipal water infrastructure. See MTC article on page 12. The district has spent almost \$15 million as of September and the project is about 68% complete. The project is projected to total about \$21.8 million.

Note: For NDS pipeline project updates, alternative traffic routes, road closures, answers to questions, and to sign up for email and text notifications, visit www.triviewnds.com. The link can also be found at www.triviewmetro.com.

Addition to loan proposed

The district is working with the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCBC) to increase an existing loan. The state-funded agency receives its revenue from oil and gas severance taxes and provides loans for water resource projects. The district received a loan from CWCBC for about \$4.7 million to build the first phase of the South Reservoir, but as the project is ending there are several invoiced items that arose, such as creating the bottom of the reservoir to enable good drainage, and \$19,000 for additional engineering. Adding the

expenditure of \$419,930 to the loan at 2.05% for a combined project total of about \$5.1 million is a smart solution, taking advantage of the low interest loan rather than spending district cash, he said. The proposal will be presented for approval at the Nov. 16 board meeting.

- Operations report**
- McGrady said the following:
- Water Attorney Chris Cummins is still working on the participate agreement with the Forest Lakes Metropolitan District's (FLMD) attorney. Cummins is waiting on some information from JDS Hydro and the FLMD attorney and is aiming for a completed agreement by the end of December to enable the first payment at the beginning of 2024.
 - Northern Monument Creek Interceptor (NMCI) requests for proposal for the design of the pipeline were due at the end of October. The stakeholders will begin looking at designs around Nov. 6.
 - The district continues to work with D38 on the Higby Road design. Some of the developers will submit their final development plans soon, but the final right of way is still being discussed. Discussions with the Town of Monument continue regarding the final width of the widening/redesign project.
 - A flow test on the pump at the South Reservoir was conducted with the pump manufacturer, and the pump reached the maximum of 32 cubic feet per second. The pump is designed to allow 64 acre-

- feet of water flow into the reservoir per day.
- Utilities Department update**
- McGrady said the following:
- Water sales for September were a total of about 46.508 million gallons. The district hit the maximum to date at 50 million gallons in July. Production was at 1.5 million gallons per day, but it is down to less than 1 million gallons per day now that the homeowners have drained their sprinkler systems.
 - The check valve for the A4 Well, located at the bottom of a pipe 1,600 feet deep, had failed and was causing problems with the variable frequency drive, so every time it was turned on the pump had to move a full column of water to the surface. The pipe was pulled out and the valve at the bottom was replaced, and another valve was installed half way down the pipe to avoid pumping a large amount of water in the future.
 - All backflow tests and prevention checks were completed, and 100% compliance has been achieved.
 - The Vector truck has cleaned about 1,600 feet of sewer lines since being placed into service. Monument Marketplace and the Vista Apartments are completed, and the district has saved about \$48,000 so far. The process can take place only when the temperatures are above freezing. The truck is winterized daily and housed in a heated environment to protect the apparatus from any water residue freezing in the truck.

Badger water meters

McGrady said the district has about 158 Badger meters (a cellular water

meter with real-time water monitoring technology) left to install out of 2,100 homes. It costs more for the district to manually read those meters from the street, and eventually the old technology will not be available to read the old meters remotely, and access to basements will be the only solution. The district may need to take steps in the future if 100% compliance cannot be achieved. Residents refusing the installation of the new meters may need to pay extra for meter reading in the future, he said.

Note: There is no cost to residents for installation of the new meter, and installation takes about 30 minutes. For more information about the cellular meter, visit <https://www.badgermeter.com>.

Executive session

The board moved into an executive session at 6:45 p.m. pursuant to Colorado Revised Statute 24-6-402(4) (a), (b), (e), to discuss acquisitions and receive legal advice for negotiations relating to water supply contracts, property acquisitions, strategic planning, and change cases.

District Administrator Joyce Levad notified OCN after the meeting that no actions were taken by the Board of Directors when the regular meeting resumed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Meetings are usually held on the third Thursday every month at the district office at 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Nov. 16 at 5:30 p.m. For meeting agendas, minutes, and updates, visit <https://triviewmetro.com>.

Natalie Barszcz can be reached at nataliebarszcz@ocn.me.

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Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, Oct. 9

Draft 2024 budget presented; tap fee discussion continues

By James Howald

District Manager Jessie Shaffer presented a draft of the 2024 budget to the Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) board at its October meeting. The board continued its effort to set water and tap fees and voted on a change to its employee benefits policy. Two class action lawsuits related to Per- and Polyfluorinated Substances (PFAS) were discussed, and Shaffer updated the board on the district's cybersecurity strategy. The board also heard operational reports.

Budget presented; workshop and hearing scheduled

Shaffer distributed copies of a proposed 2024 budget to the board and asked it to schedule a workshop for further discussion. The board scheduled the workshop for Oct. 24.

Shaffer pointed out that a change to rates or fees required an announcement to the public 30 days in advance of a vote on that change and said that if changes were decided on at the November meeting there would not be adequate time to announce the change before the December meeting. He suggested that the December board meeting be changed from Dec. 11 to Dec. 18 to provide adequate notice. The board approved his suggestion to reschedule the December meeting.

Attorney Erin Smith suggested opening the Nov. 13 board meeting with a public hearing on the budget and continuing the hearing until the Dec. 18 board meeting. Votes on any

rate changes and on budget approval could be held at the December meeting, she said.

The board decided to follow Smith's schedule.

Water and sewer tap fees debate continues

Following up on his presentations at the two previous board meetings, Andrew Rheem of Rafelis, the company that advises WWSD on rates and fees, presented another round of analysis intended to help the board decide how to set water and tap fees to balance the interests of current residents with those of future residents and developers. Rheem addressed the questions raised by the board following his previous presentations. He said he had corrected an error in his calculations and had reconsidered the role of the district's Renewable Water Infrastructure Fee (RWIF), the monthly charge that covers debt service on the district's purchase of Woodmoor Ranch and its water rights, in his analysis.

Rheem explained the guiding principles and the case law regarding the setting of tap fees. He said first there must be a link between the impact new development has on the system and the fees that fund that development. Secondly, there must be a rough proportionality between the fees and the impact of new development. Finally, the fees can't discriminate between types of new development.

Funding the El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority (EPCRL-WA) water re-use project, in which WWSD is a participant, is an important factor in how WWSD should set its tap fees, Rheem said. He discussed three methods to fund the project:

- Revenue bonds, backed up by rate increases, for \$85 million in debt, with a 20-year loan term and 4.5% interest rate. This scenario assumes the other three participating districts will also assume their share of the costs.
- General Obligation bonds, which would need to be approved by voters.
- A "Go it alone" scenario where WWSD pays for the entire project, expected to cost \$181 million with revenue bonds.

Rheem said he had re-calculated the replacement cost of WWSD's entire system in light of the board's comments at the previous meeting and the Replacement Cost New (RCN) of the system stood at \$137 million, about \$3 million more than he previously calculated.

Rheem said he had changed his



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approach to distributing the outstanding debt from the purchase of the Woodmoor Ranch based on last month's discussion. WWSD has \$12.5 million of unretired debt for that purchase. Dividing that debt by the number of residences when Woodmoor reaches complete buildout means each resident would be responsible for just under \$2,400 of that debt, Rheem said.

Board President Brian Bush questioned this approach, asking Rheem why the unretired debt should not be divided by the current number of residents rather than by the future number of residents at buildout. Rheem argued using future residents was necessary to abide by the principle of proportional impact of development. Bush also questioned whether the Woodmoor Ranch and its water rights should be considered as outstanding debt or as an asset.

Rheem said the current water tap fee was \$29,788 and proposed three potential water tap fees, each assuming a different approach to funding the EPCRLWA project:

- A water tap fee of \$44,791 if the project is funded with revenue bonds.
- A water tap fee of \$27,195

if the project is funded with general obligation bonds. In this scenario the project cost would be paid via property taxes, not tap fees. This fee would be \$2,553 less than the current fee.

- A water tap fee of \$64,370, if the cost of the project is paid entirely by WWSD. This is the "Go it alone" scenario.

Director Tom Roddam asked Rheem to estimate the maximum tap fee WWSD could charge without being challenged in court. Shaffer said he thought a case could be made for a water tap fee around \$54,000 if the EPCRLWA project were funded with revenue bonds and the costs were shared among the four participating districts.

Directors Dan Beley and Bill Clewe supported setting the water tap fee at \$44,791, arguing that Woodmoor was a desirable community and new residents should be prepared to pay the price to live here.

Bush reiterated his concerns about how the RCN was being calculated, about whether Woodmoor Ranch should be thought of as an asset or an outstanding debt and about inconsistencies in how the EPCRLWA costs were fac-

tored in.

The board asked Rheem to update his analysis in time for its budget workshop on Oct. 24.

Hospital reimbursement option dropped

Shaffer asked the board to authorize removing the Hospital Reimbursement Plan (HRP) from the district's employee benefit package. The option doesn't pay for a lot, he said, and the Colorado Employer Benefit Trust (CEBT), which provides WWSD's health plans, wants to remove it from its offerings. CEBT included the HRP in its portfolio to provide a low-cost, low-benefit choice so that districts could reach 100% participation. CEBT has dropped the requirement for 100% participation, Shaffer said.

The board authorized Shaffer to draft a resolution removing the option if CEBT accepts the possibility WWSD may not reach 100% participation by employees.

"Forever chemical" class action lawsuits

Shaffer told the board that class action lawsuits have been filed against 3M and DuPont regarding their production of PFAS chemicals, sometimes called "forever chemicals" because of their persistence in

the environment. They have been linked to many health issues, including cancer. Shaffer said the lawsuits had been filed on behalf of every public utility in the country.

Shaffer said WWSD had tested for these chemicals in the past and they were not present in WWSD's groundwater in detectable levels. Bush said the district could join the lawsuits if it had spent money on PFAS removal or testing. The lawsuits are asking for \$11 billion in settlements. He asked Smith to file a claim on the WWSD's behalf.

Cybersecurity strategy recommendations

At the previous board meeting, Shaffer was asked to review WWSD's approach to cybersecurity. The district will add a technology called "end-point detection and response," which involves continuous monitoring of the WWSD's IT assets. Shaffer said the staff would be trained on cybersecurity threats.

Highlights of the operational reports

- In his financial report, board Treasurer Roy Martinez said that revenue from water sales was at 67% of the budgeted amount. Given the time of year, he would expect

water sales to be closer to 75%, he said. Martinez attributed the lower sales to the year's rainier weather.

- Operations Superintendent Dan LaFontaine reported two main breaks, which together led to 2 million gallons of lost water.
- District Engineer Ariel Hacker reported that the county's project to expand Highway 105 between Jackson Creek Parkway and Knollwood Drive was uncovering unknown utility lines.
- Hacker said WWSD had sold 58 water and sewer taps to Classic Homes for residences in the Monument Junction East development and 30 taps to the Cloverleaf development east of Lewis-Palmer High School.

The next meeting is scheduled for Nov. 13 at 1 p.m. Meetings are usually held on the second Monday of each month at 1 p.m. at the district office at 1845 Woodmoor Drive; please see www.woodmoorwater.com or call 719-488-2525 to verify meeting times and locations.

James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me.

Monument Sanitation District, Oct. 18

Board addresses budgets, rates, liens

By Jackie Burhans and James Howald
Financial matters—budgets, rates, and liens—were the focus when the Monument Sanitation District (MSD) board met in October. The board began work on its budget for 2024 and set a date for a public hearing. The board also briefly considered the 2024 budget developed by the Joint Use Committee (JUC) for operation of the Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility (TLWWTF). The board discussed potential changes to rates and fees and scheduled a public hearing to consider them. The board heard a report on delinquent liens and a monthly operational report from District Manager Mark Parker.

MSD 2024 budget presentation

Parker reviewed the MSD budget for 2024 that he presented to the board at the previous meeting. In response to a question from Director Skip Morgan concerning reserve funds, Parker explained the Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR) requires the district to maintain a certain amount of money in reserve that can't be used for operating expenses. He pointed out that the 2024 budget increased the money budgeted for property and loss insurance and for workers compensation insurance. He explained that engineering fees increased over the previous budget due to \$43,000 in unpaid engineering fees owed to the district. Legal fees also increased because some recording fees and document

review fees were included that would be broken out in future budgets.

The board voted to hold a public hearing on the 2024 budget at its next board meeting, scheduled for 9 a.m. Nov. 15 at the district office at 130 Second St. An announcement of the hearing is included in bills for October.

JUC 2024 draft budget

Parker presented a draft of the 2024 budget for the JUC. MSD partners with Woodmoor Water and Sanitation district and the Town of Palmer Lake in the operation of the TLWWTF: All three approve the JUC's budget.

Parker said sludge removal costs are increasing due to increased fuel costs. Board President Dan Hamilton pointed out the operations costs increased by 30% in the proposed budget.

The board voted unanimously to approve the JUC budget as presented.

Rates and fees remain unchanged

The board discussed online payments, and Parker pointed out that out of 1,757 accounts only 302 pay online with a credit card. The district charges a 2.59% fee for online payments, he said. Hamilton commented that some customers pay by check to avoid the fee. The board discussed a small increase in rates to cover this fee for the customer, but Parker recommended no increase in the 2024 budget. He said staff would continue to study the issue.

Parker said MSD had not

raised rates since 2020, when the monthly rate increased from \$35 to \$40 per month.

The board also discussed tap fees, which are charges paid when a new customer connects to the MSD infrastructure. Parker said the 2023 budget anticipated \$500,000 in tap fee revenue but the actual figure came in closer to \$1.9 million. He said he expected tap fee revenue to be lower in 2024. He explained some tap fees were being paid by homeowners in Wakonda Hills whose septic tanks were failing, requiring them to connect to the MSD collection system. Parker said he expected to see additional tap fee revenue in 2024 from the Willow Springs development, the Monument Ridge development, and from the Rickenbacker Avenue de-

velopment.

The board scheduled a second public hearing to address rates and fees for 9 a.m. Nov. 15 at the district office at 130 Second St. An announcement of the hearing is included in bills for October.

Liens on delinquent accounts

Parker said the district had about 11 delinquent accounts and asked the board to approve Resolution 10182023-1, which would place liens on those accounts. One delinquent account amounted to \$43,000, he said. The board voted unanimously in favor of the resolution.

Manager's report

In his manager's report, Parker said a recent upgrade to the MSD office building's electri-

cal service had been completed at a much lower cost than anticipated. He said he had signed a contract with a roofing company to repair the office building's roof.

Monument Sanitation District meetings are normally held at 9 a.m. on the third Wednesday of the month in the district conference room at 130 Second St., Monument. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Nov. 15, 2023. See <https://colorado.gov/msd>. For a district service map, see <https://colorado.gov/pacific/msd/district-map-0>. Information: 719-481-4886.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me. James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me.



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Donala Water and Sanitation District, Oct. 12

2024 legal budget presented

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans
At its October meeting, the Donala Water and Sanitation District (DWSD) board continued its work on a budget for 2024. It also heard operational reports.

2024 legal budget

DWSD District Manager Jeff Hodge began by pointing out that the budget before the board was a “legal” budget, in the format required by the state, with three columns showing the actual year-end figures for 2022, the projected year-end figures for 2023, and the budgeted figures for 2024.

Hodge predicted a \$2 million decline in the district’s ending fund balance from 2023 to 2024 due to \$1.6 million needed to repair storage tanks, leaving the district with just under \$9 million in reserves in 2024. Hodge said he expected reserves to increase in 2025 and 2026.

Water sales were \$3.4 million in 2022 and were projected to decrease to \$2.7 million by the end of 2023, a decline of about \$731,000, Hodge said. Water sales are expected to be \$3.2 million in 2024. Sewer service revenue is expected to be about \$1.6 million for both 2023 and 2024.

Hodge said that while the district was neither in

favor of nor against Proposition HH, the 2024 budget was put together on the assumption that it would pass. The district’s general property tax revenue is budgeted to increase by \$600,000 in 2024.

Interest income was \$120,144 in 2022, is projected to be \$446,512 at the end of 2023, and is budgeted for \$594,000 in 2024.

Grant proceeds are budgeted for \$1.6 million in 2024, due primarily to American Rescue Plan Act funds awarded to DWSD for radium mitigation.

Overall, revenue is expected to increase slightly in 2024, Hodge said.

On the expense side, Hodge said operating expenses were expected to double from \$3.4 million in 2023 to \$6.1 million in 2024 due to a requirement by the state that certain repair and maintenance projects be included in this line item.

The board scheduled a public hearing on the budget for 1:30 p.m. Dec. 7 at the district offices at 15850 Holbein Drive.

Highlights of operational reports

- Water Operator Ronny Wright told the board that the district’s study of hydrous manganese oxide technology to reduce radium levels in treated

water was going well, and he expected testing to be complete by the end of 2023. The study results will be submitted to the state for review.

- The planned maintenance on the district’s water tanks is scheduled to start in May.
- The vault for Well 16A is complete, and work on the electrical system for the well is being scheduled.
- Cracking in the walls of the sequential batch reactor at the Upper Monument Creek Waste Water Treatment Facility will be repaired using pressurized resin injection.

The next meeting is scheduled for Nov. 16 at 1:30 p.m. Generally, board meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at 1:30 p.m. and include online access; call (719) 488-3603 or access www.donalawater.org to receive up-to-date meeting information. The district office is located at 15850 Holbein Drive, Colorado Springs.

JamesHowaldcanbereachedatjameshowald@ocn.me.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at
jackieburhans@ocn.me

El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority, Oct. 19

Board reviews 2024 budget, finances

By James Howald

At its October 19 meeting, the El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority (EPCRLWA) board briefly discussed a draft of its 2024 budget and its finances for the previous month. It heard a progress report from its Project Planning and Workflow manager (PPWM). The board discussed finding a company to provide financial services for the project. Finally, the board also heard results from the most recent water quality tests.

2024 budget and September financial report

Board President Jessie Shaffer asked the board for comments on the proposed 2024 budget. EPCRLWA attorney Russell Dykstra asked if the participating districts—Cherokee Metropolitan District, Donala Water and Sanitation District, the Town of Monument and Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District—would be reimbursed in 2024 for the funds they have spent on the project so far. Shaffer said the goal was to reimburse the districts but that depended on how much of the \$4 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding remained after needed studies and design services are completed. Not all district investments would be reimbursable, he said.

John Kuosman, a water practice leader with Merrick and Co. recently hired by EPCRLWA to serve as the project’s PPWM, said he thought the money allocated for professional fees was too little and he would work on a better estimate.

Board Secretary Mike Forman pointed out that no additional revenue beyond the ARPA funds was expected in 2024.

The board voted to hold a public hearing on the budget at its December meeting. Shaffer asked the board to prepare for further discussion of the budget at the November meeting.

The board also reviewed the project’s claims for September, which consisted of a \$16,375 invoice from BBA Water Consultants Inc. for operations modeling, a \$10,683 invoice from JVA Consulting Engineers for water quality testing, a \$3,955 invoice from Spencer Fane for legal services and a fourth invoice for \$280 from the Froman Co. The board voted unanimously to authorize the payment of the invoices.

Project report

Kuosman updated the board on his project management activities in September. He said he met with Jenny Bishop, a project engineer for Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU), to discuss how EPCRLWA could work together with CSU. Bishop is working on a grant to implement indirect potable reuse for CSU’s customers, and she is reviewing a proposal from EPCRLWA that CSU do some portion of the water treatment required by EPCRLWA’s loop project. Shaffer said he wanted EPCRLWA’s project specifically mentioned in Bishop’s grant language.

At the previous meeting, Kuosman discussed a letter of interest he intended to send to consulting and engineering companies to assess their interest in the loop project. At the October meeting, he said he had received 53 responses that would form the basis of a mailing list EPCRLWA would use to identify contributors.

Kuosman said he met with Dykstra and Shaffer to discuss the legal structure the participating districts will use to define contributions and operations. He said districts would need to make a final commitment to the project in 2024.

Kuosman mentioned he had been authorized to contact Mary Shinn, an environmental reporter at The Gazette, to keep her informed about the loop project. He said Foreman had already made a state-

ment about the project to The Gazette.

Board seeks financial services company

Shaffer asked about a request for proposal (RFP) from financial services companies. Dykstra said the RFP should be finished later in the day and he would circulate it to five companies that he considered to be specialists in the financial areas required by the project.

The board voted unanimously to authorize Dykstra to write the RFP and circulate it as proposed.

Water test results show variation

Richard Hood, of JVA Inc., the company EPCRLWA has hired to assess water quality and design the water treatment aspects of the project, told the board the water quality tests done in September showed hardness, alkalinity, total organic carbon, sulfate, chloride and calcium all at their highest levels to date. The samples were taken from the Chilcott Ditch. He said further testing was needed to determine if the most recent results would continue. The board elected to continue testing a wide range of analytes to make sure adequate data was collected to design effective water treatment protocols.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Nov. 16 at 9 a.m. Regular meetings are usually held on the third Thursday of each month at 9 a.m. at the Monument Town Hall at 645 Beacon Lite Road. Workshop meetings are held the first Thursday of each month at 9 a.m. at the Cherokee Metropolitan District offices at 6250 Palmer Park Blvd., Colorado Springs. Please see loopwater.org or call 719-488-3603 to verify meeting times and locations.

JamesHowaldcanbereachedatjameshowald@ocn.me.

Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, Oct. 11

Subdistrict dissolution process update; tax revenue uncertain

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) rescheduled September meeting held on Oct. 11, the Board of Directors received an update on the subdistrict dissolution process, heard about revenue uncertainty, and received the first presentation of the proposed 2024 budget.

Director Mike Forsythe was excused.

The meeting began at 4:38 p.m. due to a delay with the Zoom link.

Subdistrict dissolution process update

The district’s attorney, Michelle Ferguson of Ireland Stapleton Pryor Pascoe PC law firm, attending via Zoom, said the subdistrict dissolution election is working its way through the process and hopefully the district will have a result on Nov. 8. See www.ocn.me/v23n8.htm#dwfpd and www.ocn.me/v18n12.htm#dwfpd.

Note: The board adopted a temporary increase of 7.17 mills (for the district) and 15.25 mills (for the sub-district) in property tax collection for 2023. The mill levy adjustment was approved to offset a loss of revenue that occurred due to the state Legislature’s temporary drop in the Residential Assessment Rate for 2023. See www.ocn.me/v22n12.htm#dwfpd and visit www.monumentfire.org for information regarding the Joint Factual Summary for the DWFPD dissolution and the mill levy certification for each district can be found under transparency for DWFPD.

Property tax revenue uncertain

Fire Chief Andy Kovacs said the following:

- The district is awaiting the outcome of the Nov. 7

election and the passing or failure of Proposition HH.

- If it does not pass, further state legislation is planned to cap special district revenue at 4%.
- Depending on the outcome of Proposition HH either passing or failing, and if 6A/6B passes or fails, the district will refer back to the board with a new revenue proposal and budget accordingly.
- If the ballot measure 6A/6B passes, residents will see a decrease in the mill levy.
- The combined district revenue for 2024 is estimated to be about \$22 million (includes about \$4.3 million in property tax revenue for DWFPD); the contractual services for providing fire and EMS service to the Wescott customers is projected at about \$4.2 million.

The lion’s share of revenue comes from property tax assessments, but the district receives other revenue sources from impact fees within the Town of Monument, specific ownership taxes, and a state supplement for the EMS ambulance has increased by \$30,000 for a total of \$330,000 for 2024, he said.

Increased costs of doing business

Kovacs said that since 2004, and even 2019, there has been an astronomical difference in the cost of new apparatus, with most engines taking three years to build. The district has three Ford F150 chassis on order, and a new ambulance with an anticipated delivery date in the first quarter of 2024. The ambulance required finding a new vendor due to the district’s usual vendor having no availability, resulting in a \$30,000 cost increase. The combined district historically received more revenue in 2023, but the cost of doing business has increased, with higher health care costs for additional family members. Salaries and benefits will need to remain competitive to recruit and retain staff, he said.

Proposed 2024 budget

Kovacs said budget development consumes the administrative staff from May until it concludes in December. The district has about a dozen budget coordinators, typically lieutenants, engineers, and firefighters that gain budgeting experience by helping

to submit proposals for item requests. The staff use the five-year strategic plan, itemize expenses, complete project appraisals for equipment expenses, use industry standards, and provide explanations for the purchases. Ultimately the requests are submitted to the executive team, and if approved those items are included in the budget by the executive team, he said.

Division Chief of Operations Jonathan Bradley said the district is proposing \$16,000 for additional technical rescue equipment (multiple use items), and supplies (single use items), and each budget line item will be managed separately by two staffers. The water/ice rescue boat (at Monument Lake) is human powered, so an insert is being fabricated to attach an electric motor, he said.

Kovacs said the line staff requested winter jackets be included in the 2024 uniform budget proposed at \$92,800. The winter jacket requests will be at the discretion of each employee, but the uniform budget will probably not be fully expended because some employees have no need for a storm jacket, he said.

Note: For more detailed budget information see www.ocn.me/v23n10.htm#mfd and the Monument Fire District (MFD) article on page 12. The proposed 2024 budgets for DWFPD and MFD and public notices are available to view at www.monumentfire.org. A public hearing will be held on Nov. 15 at 4:30 p.m. for the DWFPD proposed 2024 budget, followed by the Board of Directors’ final approval. The public hearing for the MFD proposed 2024 budget will be held at 6:30 p.m. the same day, followed by the Board of Directors’ final approval. See footnote for further details.

Chief’s report

Bradley said the following:

- Staff continue to attend meetings in the region to maintain the district’s voice within the county.
- An automatic aid agreement with the Pike National Forest in the mutual threat zone (1 mile beyond the MFD/U.S. Forest Service boundary) and all call types are now active with El Paso County Sheriff’s Office Dispatch. The district recently assisted with a couple of vehicle rollovers

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- on Mount Herman Road.
- Battalion Chief Scott Ridings is making progress with gathering accreditation information for the combined district, and the process will require one more year of call data. Thanks to Ridings, the task is over 90% complete.
 - The Community Chipping program completed six chippings in September and has closed until May 2024. The district is already scheduling for the next season.
 - The former Wescott aerial ladder

truck received a new transmission replacement and is back in service (in reserve status).

- An electric tank-to-pump valve, now obsolete, needed to be fabricated for the small water tender which is back in service.
- The Station 4 air-duct vents were cleaned for about \$4,000.

Note: For additional information, see www.ocn.me/v23n10.htm#mfd and see the MFD article on page 12.

The meeting adjourned at 5:57 p.m.

Meetings are usually held every other month on the fourth Wednesday at Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. The next regular meeting will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 15 at 4:30 p.m. A Pension Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled to precede the regular meeting at 4 p.m. For Zoom meeting instructions, agendas, minutes, and updates, visit www.monumentfire.org or con-

tact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

Natalie Barszcz can be reached at nataliebarszcz@ocn.me.

Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District, Oct. 18

Resolution opposes Proposition HH; preliminary budget proposed

By Janet Sellers

At the Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD) meeting on Oct. 18, the board approved a posted resolution in opposition to proposition HH to inform residents about the potential effects on property tax revenue for the district and received a preliminary proposed 2024 budget. The board also heard about the hiring of four firefighters.

All the board directors were present

Proposition HH opposed

The directors discussed concerns about the potential loss of property tax revenue if Proposition HH passes in the Nov. 7 statewide election. In their resolution (which can be found under public notices at www.bffire.org) they stated, "the board were unanimously opposed to Proposition HH as it was not only about BFFRPD, it is also about Colorado special districts (there are over 2,500 special districts in Colorado). Special districts are an integral piece of local government in Colorado. Special districts provide vital life-saving and critical infrastructure services throughout Colorado. These services include fire protection, ambulance, healthcare, sanitation, wastewater, parks and recreation, and libraries. Local taxpayers and local elected officials should be making local tax decisions. The board approved the resolution to oppose Proposition HH."

Proposed 2024 budget

Fire Chief PJ Langmaid presented the preliminary 2024 budget proposal and said it was earlier than the normal budget calendar due to the potential issues with the Proposition HH and increased property valuations. He suggested the board consider a budget based on a 15.24 mill levy to stabilize revenues

and avoid a shortfall. He proposed eliminating the debt on the engine and the tender, providing a 4.7% cost of living increase for employees, and hiring six firefighters to enable the operation of the 2005 mid-mount aerial ladder truck.

Langmaid said budget savings have been possible due to the wildland fire deployments of personnel in 2023 covering wage expenses throughout the year. Langmaid said it is unknown how the budget may be affected in 2024 due to the increased property value assessments and the possible exclusion of dual taxation residents. He said the district is using foresight to make the budget decisions for 2024 based on the ballot initiative of 2018 rather than the decisions made by the City of Colorado Springs and the potential impact to revenue if Proposition HH is approved.

The board approved Resolution 2023-02, opposing Proposition HH.

Firefighters hired

Four employees were hired and began work on Oct. 16.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Meetings are usually held on the third Wednesday of the month at station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. Meetings are open to the public in person or via Zoom. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 15, at 7 p.m. For joining instructions, updates, agendas, minutes, and reports, visit www.bffire.org or contact Director of Public Relations Brooke Reid at admin@bffire.org or call (719) 495-4300.

Janet Sellers can be reached at janetsellers@ocn.me.



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Monument Fire District, Oct. 25

Fallen firefighter remembered; fire academy development underway

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Monument Fire District (MFD) meeting on Oct. 25, the board received the second presentation of the proposed 2024 budget addressing executive staff changes and station staffing, and the board heard about the coordinated development of a regional fire academy program.

President Mike Smaldino led a moment of silence before the pledge of allegiance in memory of Driver/Engineer Bobby Keese after his sudden off-duty passing. Keese served with the Colorado Springs Fire Department (CSFD) for over 30 years.

Director Tom Tharnish was excused.

Second presentation of the proposed 2024 budget

Fire Chief Andy Kovacs said almost three years had passed since he joined the district, and part of his promise was succession planning to avoid any future leadership void. He recommended a few organizational changes to prepare the department for future leadership of the district, and said:

- The proposed organizational chart for 2024 would create an executive battalion chief position to learn the budget and administration skills under the direct supervision of the fire chief for a year. Battalion Chief Micah Coyle will be the first to fill this role.
- Division Chief of Operations Jonathan Bradley will move to the position of division chief of Community Risk after learning fire marshal skills.
- The workload of Division Chief of Administration/Fire Marshal Jamey Bumgarner needs to be divided. Bumgarner would still be responsible for fleet, logistics, communications, and information technology for the district.
- The position of EMS battalion chief will be eliminated and Battalion Chief Sean Pearson will return to shift commander, replacing Coyle.
- Battalion Chief Shannon Balvanz will be the Training and EMS battalion chief.
- A two-year rotating administration assignment is proposed for the training lieutenant position. See www.ocn.me/v23n10.htm#mfd.
- The EMS clinical coordinator position will be filled by Paramedic Stephanie Soll.
- A hiring process will be conducted to fill the EMS educator position.

Vice President John Hildebrandt said the department had undergone many changes in the three years under Kovacs' leadership, to include the consolidation with Wescott. At the threshold of blossoming a whole lot more, the transformation is quite incredible, he said.

Kovacs said it is important to get the right people in the right positions and allow staff to excel. The department has a long line of folks ready to assume leadership responsibilities. A couple of additional pickup trucks are budgeted and will be needed for the additional positions in the organization.

Smaldino said he echoed Hildebrandt's comments on the direction of the district, and it is good to develop the organizational chart, but staff coming up underneath to reach the appropriate level is the whole goal.

Kovacs said it is important to build the infrastructure and great emphasis is needed on providing enough firefighters and paramedics to improve health and safety for all staffers.

Bradley said the district station staffing plan had undergone several iterations, but the Master Plan conducted by Emergency Services Consulting International in 2019 recommended over-staffing of 1.22 persons per shift. In 2023, each shift had 21 staffers plus two additional per shift. With training, retirements, resignations, and sick and annual leave, the 23 per shift is not maintained. In 2024 the district is budgeting for two staff members to attend Paramedic School. From 2025 to 2029 the district may add additional line staff per shift incrementally. It is not easy on the existing staff to onboard a large number of newly trained firefighters all at once, he said.

Smaldino asked about the timeline for opening a sixth station, and said the district would require temporary over-staffing, and the apparatus purchases would

need to be made several years in advance to facilitate opening on time.

Kovacs said the district is operating out of five stations and responds to about 4,000 calls annually. Pursuing a sixth station will depend on call volume, growth within the district, and the ability to meet the standard response times in all areas of the district. Those timings will be established through the accreditation process. A sixth station in the next five years is unlikely due to signs of a recession, with homes being purchased at a lower rate than five years ago, along with less competitive over-bidding to purchase a home. There is a steady decline for both commercial and residential permits, he said.

Bumgarner said developers are proposing to build in Monument but more significantly multi-family units and commercial development are being planned rather than single-family homes. The Eagle Rock Distribution Center undergoing construction in the Falcon Commerce Center will be the single largest building within the district. A 400-unit apartment complex is planned north of the Woodmen Valley Chapel, and a family entertainment park is proposed north of the apartment complex. Growth is not consistent, so the full development may not happen for a while. A sixth station will not be required until further development begins on the west side of I-25, he said.

Fire academy program development

Kovacs said that in the past the district had relied on sending recruits to gain fire academy experience at a larger organization, but unfortunately placements are not available in 2024. The district is quickly establishing a fire academy program to begin in January 2024 in partnership with Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD) and Pikes Peak State College (PPSC).

Bradley said that it was gracious for the Colorado Springs Fire Department (CSFD) Fire Academy to host the district firefighter recruits for the past two years, but the district has vacant positions and cannot go a year without sending staff and new hires to a fire academy. PPSC has three CSFD professional firefighter instructors to instruct and replicate the tuition. The district is partnering with BFFRPD and PPSC to run the 600-hour, 16-week fire academy. Spots will be open to self-pay students, and smaller career agencies within the county have been invited to send recruits. The anticipated minimum attendance is eight to 10 students per academy but 15 placements are expected with a cap at 18 per academy, he said.

Kovacs said initially the new fire academy may not be perfect, but in the future it will be comparable to other academies when the district develops the 14-acre training center at Station 1. Kudos to Bradley, BFFRPD and PPSC for developing the academy at short notice after receiving word in September that access to the CSFD academy would not be available in 2024, he said.

Firefighter hiring in process

Coyle said 56 potential firefighter recruits completed the written portion of the application process and interviews for 47 of those applicants have concluded and the recommendations will be made by the end of October.

Bradley said the district has two existing vacancies, will hire six recruits, and a district EMS/Medic has requested attending a firefighter academy, for a total of seven students from the district attending the fire academy in January.

Proposition HH

Hildebrandt said that if Proposition HH passes, the district will still have control over the mill levy, but not over the \$50,000 assessed reduction in property tax assessments.

Kovacs said the mill levy will need to be adjusted to absorb the loss of about \$750,000 in revenue for the combined districts in 2024. He does not anticipate receiving any backfill to compensate for lost property tax revenue from the state due to the residential and commercial growth in the district, he said.

Note: The board adopted a temporary increase in the mill levy from 18.4 mills to 18.83 mills in property tax collection for 2023. The mill levy adjustment was approved to offset a loss of revenue that occurred due to the state Legislature's temporary drop in the Resi-

dential Assessment Rate for 2023. See www.ocn.me/v22n12.htm#mfd. The mill levy certification can be found under transparency at www.monumentfire.org.

Hildebrandt said the wording for ballot questions 6A/6B for the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District residents is unfavorable, suggesting an increase in taxes rather than an actual decrease.

Kovacs said a Gleneagle Safety Association has been formed to educate the Gleneagle residents on Ballot questions 6A/6B. A 51% vote in favor of the dissolution process is required to pass the measure on Nov. 7. Passing the measure will increase the level of service to the residents of Gleneagle, coupled with a drop in the mill levy for those residents. The mutual agreement between the district and CSFD for the small southern enclave (an area without fire hydrants at the southern end of Voyager Parkway) will need to be revisited after the election, he said.

Note: The notice of public hearing and proposed 2024 budget is available for viewing at www.monumentfire.org. The public hearing will be held on Nov. 15 followed by final approval by the Board of Directors.

Chief's report

Kovacs said the following:

- Two firefighters suffered minor to moderate injuries during a working garage fire on Sept. 13.
- A contract is under review by the legal team for American Medical Response (AMR). The regional partners are requesting AMR contact special districts to provide mutual aid to AMR only when all CSFD EMS units are exhausted. The district responded to 11 requests to AMR in September. It was an unusual spike, and those responses remain at the discretion of the shift battalion chief. The priority is to always ensure ambulances remain available for district residents.
- Staff completed a district-wide Courage Under Fire leadership training and lithium ion and electric vehicle training.
- The district anticipates receiving the Type 3 Wildland Engine and an ambulance in November, and another ambulance in the first quarter of 2024.
- The remodel of Station 5 is underway and is expected to be completed in late December.
- During October Fire Prevention month, staff attended 17 first-grade classes to talk to students about cooking safety.

For additional information, see the DWFPD article on page 10 or visit www.monumentfire.org.

EMS supplies donated

Kovacs said the Denver Metro fire chiefs are collecting EMS supplies to donate to Israel. EMS coordinator Soll identified expired supplies within the district and a point of contact from CSFD will deliver the supplies to Denver for transportation to Israel. The district is proud to be part of the effort, and those supplies will be saving lives during the conflict, he said. The meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.

Correction

In the October edition, under "Community paramedic proposal," the last sentence of the first paragraph should have read: "The Colorado Springs Fire Department and South Metro Fire Rescue already have robust programs, and the district calls for fall assistance are about 15% and about 11% for mental health assistance of the total EMS call volume." *OCN* regrets the error.

Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday of the month. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 15 at 6:30 p.m. at Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. For Zoom meeting instructions, agendas, minutes, and updates, visit www.monumentfire.org or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

Natalie Barszcz can be reached at nataliebarszcz@ocn.me.

Monument Town Council, Oct. 2, 16, and 19

Councilmembers scrutinize traffic report, proposed investments, park development, and resolution opposing Proposition HH

By Chris Jeub

Two regular meetings and one special meeting took care of many issues in Monument in October. These included water management, streetscape redesign, traffic safety, investment strategy, and community park development.

Monument traffic study

Councilmember Ken Kimple expressed his dissatisfaction with police Commander John Lupton's traffic study, which Kimple had specifically requested. Lupton's presentation provided insights into how the Police Department tracks traffic citations, accidents, and citizen complaints. He made it clear that the study aimed to provide objective data to enhance traffic safety. However, Kimple was not entirely satisfied and referred to it as "a good start."

Kimple raised concerns during the presentation, emphasizing that he had asked for studies in areas where he had personal experiences, including near-miss incidents involving himself and his wife. He particularly highlighted issues near Jackson Creek Parkway, where he believed speeding cars were a major concern. He sought more comprehensive solutions to mitigate speeding and improve safety in these areas.

Commander Lupton responded by underlining his extensive 32 years of experience in conducting

traffic studies. He explained that the Police Department's role was to use data for objective decision-making and to respond with changes and enforcement measures. He also clarified that certain traffic issues, like the implementation of speed bumps, were under the jurisdiction of the Planning Department, not law enforcement. Despite Lupton's explanations, Kimple continued to express doubts and the need for more comprehensive actions to address traffic problems in his neighborhood.

Wells Fargo investment strategy criticized

Rachel Brown from Wells Fargo addressed the Monument Town Council, shedding light on an investment strategy involving the money market fund specifically designed for government entities. This initiative aimed to allow the town to maximize the interest on funds held in its bank accounts, potentially boosting revenue. Brown explained that when the town's daily balance exceeds its target amount, the excess funds are transferred into an omnibus account overnight and invested the following morning when the financial market opens. Conversely, if the balance falls below the target, provisional credit is extended to bring the town back to the desired level, and funds are deemed the next morning when the market reopens.

Mayor Mitch LaKind asked for assurances regard-

ing the protection of taxpayer money and expressed concerns about issues such as fraud and fines that had been imposed on the bank in recent years. Brian Scott, managing director for Wells Fargo, specializing in government clients, responded by acknowledging the bank's troubled history, notably the fines imposed in 2016. He clarified that it had been a disappointing chapter in the bank's history but reassured the council that the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) rating for the bank had returned to the highest rating of "outstanding" status by 2020. Despite Scott's explanation, LaKind remained unsatisfied and pressed for further safeguards to protect the town's money from any potential misconduct by bank employees.

Kimple inquired about Wells Fargo's motivation for the initiative, to which Scott responded that they aimed to provide excellent service to the town as a client. Councilmember Jim Romanello countered the dissent by first referencing his financial advisor experience of over 30 years, then sharing insights about money markets, emphasizing the relatively low level of risk associated with them. He encouraged the town to take advantage of the current high interest rates.

MONUMENT (Cont. on 14)

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MONUMENT (Cont. from 12)

Director of Finance Mona Hirjoi, who presented the initiative, suggested that monthly reports could be included to track the revenue generated by the fund. LaKind continued to express dissatisfaction in Wells Fargo, but the council still gave direction to the town staff to continue with the investment fund.

Heart of Monument Playpark

Resolution No. 64-2023 was discussed, which involved approving a contract with N.E.S. for the design and management of the Heart of Monument Playpark. The decision to select N.E.S. was reached after evaluation of proposals and presentations. It was clarified that the funding for this project primarily stemmed from fundraising efforts by the Kiwanis organization, which had successfully secured \$35,000 of the estimated \$47,000 required for the design phase, with the total cost of park construction estimated at \$450,000.

Scott Ross, representing Kiwanis, shared insights into the fundraising sources, which included substantial contributions from both grants and local donations. However, during the discussion, Councilmember Steve King expressed doubts and questioned the financial aspects of the project. He sought clarification on who would be responsible for the costs and expressed difficulty in comprehending the \$47,000 price tag for park design. Furthermore, King voiced concerns about N.E.S.'s past interactions with the community, claiming a "lack of compassion."

Katy Frank, a project manager with N.E.S., responded by assuring the council that she has always approached projects with community interests in mind. King inquired about Frank's role in the project, to which she confirmed her involvement as the lead. Councilmember Kimple raised a question about the park's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Frank affirmed that the park would indeed be ADA compliant.

Continuing to seek clarification, King questioned the scoring method for selecting N.E.S., and Madeline VanDenHoek explained that N.E.S. was chosen primarily due to their experience with fundraising, which was crucial for the project's success. In the end, the motion to approve the contract with N.E.S. for the park's design and management passed unanimously.

Water issues

Two presentations were given during the Oct. 2 meeting, both explaining Monument's water resources and soliciting the town's involvement. The first presentation was given by Jim McGrady, general manager for the Triview Metropolitan District, concerning the Northern Delivery System (NDS). The importance of storage was underscored as it provides the town with reserves in case of droughts. "If we don't conserve and the aquifer drops, pretty soon you find yourself without access to water," McGrady warned. His presentation ended with the request for Monument to

tap into the Triview water district. "We need to know now" if Monument would like to work with Triview.

The second presentation was from John Guzman and Jessie Schaffer of the El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority (EPCRLWA). Established in 2022, the EPCRLWA is seeking Monument's participation, with a total project cost estimated to be \$150 million to \$200 million. The primary objective is to transition away from the Denver Basin as quickly as possible and adopt a "3 Rs" approach: reducing, repurposing, and reusing water sources.

Notable distinctions between the EPCRLWA and the NDS project were discussed, including EPCRLWA's independence from third-party involvement and potential value-creation opportunities. During the discussion, Mayor LaKind expressed concern over the wide cost estimate range and urged the EPCRLWA to provide more accurate figures. In response, EPCRLWA representatives explained that the wide price range was meant to prevent misrepresentation. Schaffer insisted that the EPCRLWA is about six months out from having more accurate numbers. Amy Lathen, general manager for the EPCRLWA, concluded the presentation by emphasizing that numbers are difficult to put up right now, but the EPCRLWA allows for options to get off dependence from the Denver Basin. "Autonomy is one of the major goals [of the EPCRLWA]," she said.

After the lengthy discussion, Romanello motioned to move Resolution No. 59-2023: A Resolution Affirming Participation in the Loop Water Authority Project to the first meeting in December.

Streetscape design concepts

Michelle Lazarz, a student at the University of Colorado, presented redesign proposals for Historic Downtown Monument. The primary focus of her presentation was on wayfinding and streetscape design concepts, with the intention to enhance the area's appeal and attract visitors from the nearby interstate.

A significant aspect of the project involved assessing the existing parking spaces in the area, which currently consisted of 66 parallel parking spaces. A survey with 350 respondents was conducted. The proposal included three parking alternatives designed to optimize parking capacity while preserving the historic charm of the downtown area. However, it was emphasized that these were preliminary design concepts that would require further in-depth surveys to ensure compliance with ADA standards and streetscape regulations. The estimated budget for these proposed upgrades and improvements was \$2.2 million, encompassing enhancements to the streetscape, signage, and parking facilities.

Councilmembers posed questions and sought clarifications. Some of the key points of discussion included the consideration of roundabouts in the design, the potential increase in parking spaces with angle parking, and next steps in the project. The forthcoming stages of the project, including grant writing and planning, will be instrumental in bringing these

innovative concepts to life for the benefit of Monument's residents and visitors.

Resolution to oppose Proposition HH dies
Mayor LaKind presented Resolution No. 65-2023, which addressed the council's position on Proposition HH, a state bill with potential ramifications for Monument residents' taxes. The resolution explicitly conveyed the council's opposition to Proposition HH and encouraged Monument residents to vote against it.

However, the introduction of the resolution sparked a discussion among councilmembers. Councilmember Kimple raised concerns about the council advising residents on how to vote, fearing it might lead to legal complications. Councilmembers Laura Kronick and King also voiced apprehensions, emphasizing the council's need to remain apolitical. In response, LaKind referenced Rep. Don Wilson's remarks that previous boards had passed similar resolutions. To navigate the legal aspects of the matter, the council sought guidance from the town attorney, Robert Cole.

Cole clarified that the law allowed the council to disseminate information and cited examples of other clients using similar resolutions. Councilmember Marco Fiorito clarified that the resolution aimed to express the council's opinion rather than dictate how residents should vote. Kronick emphasized the council's non-political stance, recommending that they refrain from taking a political position. Although LaKind called for a motion to approve the resolution, no motion was presented, resulting in the resolution being dropped.

Emergency sign ordinance

On Oct. 18, the MTC held a special session to address concerns raised by the Monument Citizens for the First Amendment, a newly formed activist group, regarding the town's sign ordinance. The group claimed that the ordinance and its enforcement unconstitutionally restricted free speech, particularly related to political signage in public rights of way. An executive session was convened, and after discussions, the council decided not to pass an emergency ordinance temporarily suspending the enforcement of the specific section in question. The council, backed by the town attorney, argued that the existing sign code met legal standards and did not discriminate based on sign content.

The Monument Council usually meets at 6:30 p.m. on the first and third Mondays of each month at Monument Town Hall, 645 Beacon Lite Road. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, Nov. 6, but the Monday, Nov. 20, meeting has been cancelled. Call 719-884-8014 or see www.townofmonument.org for information. To see upcoming agendas and complete board packets or to download audio recordings of past meetings, see <https://monumenttownco.minutesondemand.com> and click on Town Council.

Chris Jeub can be reached at chrisjeub@ocn.me.

Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, Oct. 12 and 26

Use of undeveloped rights of way debated

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

In October, at two board meetings, the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees continued a discussion of how to manage undeveloped rights of way (ROWs) that arose from its discussion in previous meetings of how to regulate use of recreational vehicles (RV) on private property. It continued its work on amending the town's sign code and considered a study of Stormwater Enterprise Fund rates. Town Administrator Dawn Collins distributed a draft budget for 2024 and the board set a schedule for a public hearing and approval.

Three public hearings were held, each ending in a vote on a resolution. The board heard a petition for annexation from the United Congregational Church and granted three special event permits. The board heard a request to install an electrical vehicle charger on town property and comments from a resident regarding its accounting practices.

The Oct. 12 and Oct. 26 meetings were preceded by executive sessions, which were concluded after the regular meeting.

At the Oct. 26 meeting, the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Sarah "Buddy" Caldwell, who recently moved into Hilltop Ranch, a community living facility for disabled adults.

Use of undeveloped ROWs means risk for town

The board's discussion in previous months of how to regulate the use of RVs on private property revealed a related problem: often undeveloped ROWs that belong to the town are used to move RVs to private property. Attorney Matthew Krob pointed out that this use of undeveloped ROWs can make the town liable should an accident occur. He asked the board to consider this risk before reaching a decision on the RV issue.

At the Oct. 12 meeting, Krob reminded the board that it has the authority and the responsibility to regulate undeveloped ROWs and that the board previously adopted the El Paso County road standards in 2021. Residents using a town ROW that have built a road or driveway to standard don't present a problem, he said, but the town is liable when residents using an undeveloped ROW have not followed the road standards. When the town knows a resident is using an undeveloped ROW, the risk is even higher, he said.

Mayor Glant Havenar said requiring residents to abide by the road standards felt like over-governance. She argued Palmer Lake is unique and the road standards the town adopted might not be a good fit.

Krob pointed out that the standards allow for a range of road types, from simple gravel roads to more complex roads made from durable materials, with curbs and gutters. He suggested a review of the issue by the town's engineering consultants.

Trustee Shana Ball raised the issue of driveway agreements, contracts between residents and the town that allow the use of town ROWs to access private property but make the resident liable. The agreements need to be renewed every year. Collins said the town had a good number of these agreements in place, but some are no longer valid because they have not been renewed. Krob said the legal counsel for the Colorado Intergovernmental Risk Sharing Agency (CIRSA), which insures the town, advises against the use of driveway agreements. Krob said the town should be moving away from driveway agreements.

Krob said the town needed to put the burden of compliance with standards on the developers of the property. Failure to do this puts the town at risk, he said.

In response to a question from Ball, Fire Chief John Vincent explained that the Fire Department also set standards for roads, requiring them to provide access for emergency vehicles at all times.

The board agreed to continue the ROW discussion at its next meeting.

At the Oct. 26 meeting, Collins emphasized the difficulty of conducting town business without clear

standards in place.

Mark Morton, senior engineer at GMS Inc., explained the range of road types covered by the town's adopted standards. He pointed out that the number of daily trips on the road determined which standard would apply.

Krob repeated that the town should move away from driveway agreements and should adhere to standards to avoid being sued. He explained that if the town made an exception in one case, all future developers could demand the same exception for their project. Owners using undeveloped ROWs should be required to comply with the standards, he said.

Collins said the board should address this issue consistently going forward rather than trying to remedy every current situation.

The board took no specific action following the discussion.

Sign code discussed; moratorium extended

At the Oct. 12 meeting, Havenar said she was uncomfortable with the exceptions proposed during the previous discussion of the sign code and concerned about which signs would be grandfathered in.

Krob said the staff needed direction on how to handle new signs, old signs that were never legal, and old signs that were legal at one time but don't comply with the new sign code. If the board could clarify the issues, he would write their ideas into the code, he said.

Ball asked why this was before the board and not a matter for the Planning Commission. Krob said the Planning Commission gets its authority from the board.

Havenar said she had gotten complaints about the proposed sign code from businesses who felt the code made it difficult to do business in the town.

Krob agreed the discussion so far was causing concern among business owners. He added his sense was the board wanted the code to allow existing signs to remain unchanged, but he argued signs that were never legal should be required to comply with the new code. The board has policing power over signs, he said, and can demand signs comply or be removed. Sign compliance could be made a requirement to get a business license. Krob said the board needed to specify the maximum size for signs. He emphasized that sign content can't be regulated.

Krob said he would continue to work on the sign code and recommended that the moratorium on new signs be extended.

At the Oct. 26 meeting, the board voted unanimously to extend the moratorium on new signs for six months.

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Study of Stormwater
Enterprise Fund proposed

Morton presented a proposal for a study to determine appropriate rates for a Stormwater Enterprise Fund to the board. The proposal specifies that GMS Engineering Inc. would review the town’s financial records relating to stormwater, as well as operating and maintenance costs for proper stormwater management, and would propose fees to support stormwater management that complies with state law. The study would cost \$18,500, Morton said, would be completed within 120 days, and would include recommendations for establishing, operating, and billing for a Stormwater Enterprise Fund.

Trustee Dennis Stern asked if there was money in the budget for the study. Collins said the board has prioritized infrastructure issues, and the funds needed for the study were available. She said the current discussion was a chance to ask questions, and a resolution to approve the study would be brought to the board at a future meeting.

Resident Roger Mosely argued against the need for a stormwater enterprise fund, claiming it was an indirect way to get money for roads. He said drainage issues affected only hillside neighborhoods, his neighborhood did not have drainage issues and he should not be required to pay for problems related to stormwater.

Resident Marty Brodzik commented that it was impossible to remediate stormwater drainage problems in The Glen, as the streets had no room for culverts.

Morton pointed out that discharge of stormwater is regulated by the state, and the town will be fined if it does not comply with stormwater discharge regulations. Havenar said the town would not be able to obtain loans or grants unless a Stormwater Enterprise Fund is in place. Trustee Nick Ehrhardt said the entire town, not just the hillside neighborhoods, was responsible for proper management of stormwater.

The board took no action following the discussion on the expectation that a resolution would be brought back to them at a future meeting.

Draft of 2024 budget presented

At the Oct. 12 meeting, Collins distributed a draft of the town’s budget for 2024. The board voted to hold a public hearing on the budget at the Nov. 6 board meeting.

Public hearings and resolutions

At the Oct. 26 meeting, three public hearings were held.

A public hearing was held regarding Creighton Smith’s application for a conditional use permit to open a motorcycle maintenance business at 84 Highway 105. At the hearing, Ball raised issues about fuel storage, fumes, and proximity to a restaurant and residences. Smith said very little fuel would be stored on site and fans would be used to mitigate fumes.

Terri Hayes, president of the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce, spoke in support of Smith’s applica-

tion, arguing that the town needed tax revenue and should be willing to accept change.

Following the hearing, the board voted unanimously in favor of Resolution 69-2023, which approves Smith’s conditional use permit.

A second public hearing was held regarding James Wilson’s request to move an interior lot line on his property at 84 Highway 105, known as Wilson’s Corner. There were no questions from staff or the public at the hearing and the board voted unanimously to approve Resolution 70-2-23, authorizing the change to the lot line.

A third hearing was held regarding Maria Duran’s request to vacate and replat a property at the intersection of Buena Vista and Rosita Avenues. Collins said the staff supported the request and the board voted to approve Resolution 71-2023, granting Duran’s request.

Petition for annexation considered

Collins told the board that the United Congregational Church, at 3295 Palmer Divide Rd., has petitioned for annexation into the town. She said staff would bring back a resolution to approve the annexation at a future meeting.

Brodzik told the board that she opposed the church being annexed without relinquishing its water rights to the town. She asked that the church be required to commit to no future development on its property.

Krob said the details of the annexation would be worked out later in the process when there is a zoning request.

Special event permits granted

The board approved special event permits for three events:

- The Funky Little Theater production of The Stinky Cheese Man, Saturday, Nov. 11 at 10 a.m. at the Town Hall.
- The Second Annual Town Christmas Tree Lighting, Saturday, Dec. 2 at 5 p.m. at the Village Green next to the Town Hall. Santa Claus and his wife will attend, cocoa will be served, and there will be an ugly sweater contest.
- A Christmas Musical Review, Friday, Dec. 15 at 7 p.m. and Saturday Dec. 16 at 2 p.m. at the Town Hall. The event will be put on by the Arts Council.

Electric vehicle charger proposed

Collins told the board that CORE Electric Cooperative had proposed the installation of an electric vehicle charging station on town property, with the location to be determined. The consensus of the board was to continue the discussion with CORE, but to clarify if the town would receive revenue from the charger.

Accounting practices questioned

Brodzik asked the board to explain why entries regarding water loan reserves and American Recovery Plan Act funds were in different locations in the town’s financial reports. Collins explained some items were moved to the cash position portion of

the financial reports as part of the town’s cleanup of its financial reporting. Brodzik claimed the board is covering up serious errors in the past and pointed to voided checks as an example. Collins said that in the past there was no policy regarding voided and re-issued checks, but now the town has a register of voided checks. Collins offered to report on checks voided in 2022 if the board requested it.

Executive sessions

The Oct. 12 meeting was preceded by an executive session to discuss the potential sale of public property and to receive legal advice concerning a Police Department complaint.

The Oct. 26 meeting was preceded by an executive session to discuss the potential sale of public property and to receive legal advice concerning a Police Department complaint and a human resources complaint.

The next board meeting is scheduled for Nov. 9. The board will meet only once in November to accommodate the Thanksgiving holiday. See the town’s website at www.townofpalmerlake.com to confirm times and dates of board meetings and workshops. Meetings are typically held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month at the Town Hall. Information: 719-481-2953.

James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

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El Paso Board of County Commissioners, Oct. 3, 12, 19, and 24

County presents its 2024 preliminary
balanced budget, approves 21-home
development

By Helen Walklett

During October, the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) heard proposals for the 2024 county budget. The commissioners also approved a plan for a 21 single-family subdivision south of the Forest Lakes development.

2024 preliminary balanced budget

The county Financial Services Department presented the preliminary balanced budget at the Oct. 3 BOCC meeting. The approximate \$482.9 million budget includes \$217 million in unrestricted general fund expenditures and prioritizes investments in road infrastructure and public safety. Roads and Bridges is assigned a one-time \$10 million funding increase to address high-priority projects in addition to the base budget of \$28 million, and public safety is allocated \$97 million, 45% of the total unrestricted general fund. The budget includes a 2.5% cost-of-living pay increase for county employees.

As the county’s revenues exceeded the TABOR cap this year, residents will see a refund of \$138 per property via their property tax bill in 2024.

Nikki Simmons, chief financial officer, said: “One of the highest priorities for this budget was to ensure we have a recession-resistant budget.” Commenting on the 22% of revenue earmarked for reserves, Chair Cami Bremer said, “I am incredibly comfortable with that given the number of unknowns we have, and I think we continue to do a great job of conservative budgeting here.”

As part of the budget-setting process, county departments and offices presented their critical needs to the commissioners at the Oct. 19 and 24 meetings. A further budget hearing is scheduled for Nov. 14 when the BOCC will give final direction on budget allocations.

The public is encouraged to participate in the budget-setting process. The preliminary budget and all supporting documents can be viewed on the county website at: <https://admin.elpasoco.com/financial-services/budget-finance/county-budget/>. Paper copies are also available for inspection in the commissioners’ office at Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade Ave., Colorado Springs.

The final budget vote is scheduled to be held at the BOCC meeting on Dec. 5. However, if ballot initiative HH passes, the valuation of properties in the county could change, and budget adoption will not be

possible until the first week of January 2024.

Hay Creek 21-home subdivision

At the Oct. 12 BOCC land use meeting, the commissioners approved an application for a preliminary plan for 20 single-family lots to be known as the Hay Creek Valley subdivision. The one residence currently on the property will remain, making a total of 21 lots. The application came to the BOCC from the Sept. 21 El Paso County Planning Commission meeting with a unanimous recommendation for approval.

The 214.62-acre property is zoned RR-5 (residential rural) and located west of Interstate 25, directly north of the U.S. Air Force Academy (USAF), south of the Forest Lakes subdivision, and southwest of Monument. Lots are planned to range from 5.5 to 17 acres. The USAFA has reviewed the plan and stated that an avigation easement (giving the right of overflights in the airspace above or in the vicinity of the property) needs to be recorded with the final plat.

The property is currently gated and will continue to be once it is developed. Access is off Hay Creek Road. Jason Alwine, Matrix Design Group Inc. and representing the owner, said the county is requiring the developer to straighten the junction of the property’s private road and Hay Creek Road to provide better line of sight. Trees will be removed as part of the improvements.

Twenty-one neighbors were notified ahead of the public hearings. Justin Kilgore, planning manager, Planning and Community Development, said that concerns had been raised about the potential impacts on wildlife and traffic at the Planning Commission hearing. No one spoke against the application at the BOCC hearing. One neighbor spoke in support, stating, “As neighbors we would love to have as much open space as possible, but I do think development is inevitable and I think the developer has been very responsible in trying to keep the development” in keeping with the rest of the development in the valley.

Regarding wildlife, Alwine said Colorado Parks and Wildlife had recommended prairie dog and burrowing owl surveys that had shown no evidence of either creature. He said that raptor nesting on the property meant the developer would be limited when construction and wildfire mitigation could take place and they would work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to establish those timeframes. No high fencing was being proposed, and bear-proof containers

and inside storage would be used to help eliminate some of the human/wildlife interaction. The extent of wildfire mitigation work would depend on where

on the lots houses are built and the developer would work with county staff and the Fire Department on this throughout the construction process.

The vote to approve was unanimous.
HelenWalklettcanbereachedathelenwalklett@ocn.me.

El Paso County Planning Commission, Oct. 19

Black Forest four-lot subdivision recommended for approval

By Helen Walklett
At the Oct. 19 El Paso County Planning Commission meeting, the commissioners voted unanimously to recommend for approval rezone and minor subdivision applications to create a four-lot subdivision, Fairytale Acres, at a Herring Road property. The request is to rezone 7.59 acres of the 14.54-acre property from RR-5 (rural residential) to RR-2.5 (rural residential).
The subdivision request includes two waivers, one to allow a private roadway instead of a public road, and the other to exempt the property from having to provide a fire cistern. Discussion at the hearing centered on the latter with Ryan Howser, planner III, Planning and Community Development, explaining that although the code states a fire cistern is required where fire hydrants are not present, a 2013 Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) resolution states that subdivisions of four or fewer lots are exempt from International Fire Code (IFC) coverage, which is the model code on which the county's fire requirements are based.

Howser said, "I do think that the waiver is still warranted because our code requires it. However, I could interpret that as a conflict between the board's adopted version of the IFC and the code."
Howser stated that the Black Forest Fire Protection District (BFFPD) had chosen not to comment on the matter, its stance being that it will always recommend code compliance in lieu of making a formal recommendation one way or the other. Meggan Herington, executive director, Planning and Community Development, said that, unlike larger districts, BFFPD does not have a fire marshal looking specifically at fire code and the application of the IFC and so is choosing to stay neutral.
Nina Ruiz, Vertex Consulting Services, representing the applicant and speaking in justification of the cistern waiver, said the property was 2.5 miles from the fire station, which would allow for relaying fire trucks to fill up there should a fire occur. She also said the property was treeless and the homes would be spread apart, reducing the risk of fire jumping from

one structure to another. BFFPD's fire risk assessment has identified the property as having a low overall risk rating.
Commissioner Eric Moraes suggested, given the BOCC's resolution, that a waiver was not really needed. Herington replied, "I would disagree with that because this section of the code I believe was written in 2014 and so my question is, 'Why was this section of the land development code not amended to specify that minor subdivisions were not required to follow the land development code?'"
Herington stated, "When we update the code next year, we really need to pay attention to this section of the land development code and what needs to be in it and what doesn't need to be in it and where we would just reference International Fire Code."
The vote to recommend both applications for approval was unanimous. They are now scheduled to be heard at the BOCC land use meeting on Nov. 9.
HelenWalklettcanbereachedathelenwalklett@ocn.me.

Woodmoor Improvement Association, Oct. 25

Board president explains WIA approach

By Jackie Burhans
At its October meeting, the Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) board heard remarks from President Brian Bush comparing WIA to other homeowners associations (HOAs) and reviewed board director reports.
Board president contrasts WIA with other HOAs
Bush noted that the news about homeowners associations is frequently negative, citing recent reports that Green Valley Ranch HOA foreclosed on homes without notifying owners. He noted that Colorado House Bill 22-1137, which requires improved notices and a public vote on referring debts to a collection agency, now controls the foreclosure process for HOAs.
However, he emphasized that WIA does not and never has operated that way. Bush said that WIA, which is one of the state's largest HOAs, has never foreclosed on a property in his eight years on the board. WIA does not like to impose hearings or fine owners, preferring to work with them to correct any deficiencies. WIA wants to maintain community standards and common areas for the benefit of all residents, Bush added. All board members are volunteers, and WIA includes outstanding staff and public safety officers who focus on customer service. In one example, it was noted that a resident wondered on social media whether a 12-foot skeleton would be allowed by the HOA and was contacted by WIA staff, who said it would be fine.
Bush said if there were no HOA, he felt the area's appearance would quickly degrade. He expressed concern about the legislative direction that might make it impossible to have or to serve on HOAs. A resident asked if WIA had any connections with the Legislature, and Bush said he had contact with our local state senator and state representative and had testified on behalf of WIA residents to the El Paso Board of County Commissioners.
Asked how WIA communicates with its residents, Bush noted there was an electronic newsletter, but

WIA only has contacts for about half of its residents. Residents can subscribe to the monthly newsletter, important notices, and WPS reports at the bottom of its web page at www.woodmoor.org. Email addresses are never shared or sold, he said.
Finally, Bush noted that the WIA annual assessment is about \$283, contrasting it with other HOAs that charge as much as \$700 per month. WIA provides architectural and covenant control, access to many common areas, The Barn community center, and the services of Woodmoor Public Safety (WPS).
Board reports

- Public Safety Director Brad Gleason noted that Lewis-Palmer D38 has received approval to proceed with its Safe Routes to School trail project. Once the school district finalizes its agreement with Woodmoor Water and Sanitation, the trail and the bridge will go out to bid, and the school district will take ownership and responsibility for the maintenance of the bridge over the spillway on Woodmoor Lake.
- Board Treasurer Connie Brown reported there were 66 unpaid accounts. Bush noted that the income and expenditures were on track, and the board might end up with some savings.
- Covenants Director Per Suhr reported 35 covenant-related items yielding two violations. Ten issues were resolved with friendly communications, and there were three unfounded complaints. WIA processed 10 HOA checks related to home sales. There were no covenant hearings in October, and none planned yet in November.
- Architectural Control Director Ed Miller noted that 67 projects had been approved in September, and one project had been disapproved. Year to date, the number of submitted projects is 465, which is a 4.2% decrease from the prior year. The project approval rate is 98.8%.
- Forestry Director Cindy Thrush reported there had been 15 Forestry/Firewise visits in September and that a \$26,000 reimbursement request

had been submitted, bringing WIA to the end of its original \$245,000 matching grant for fire mitigation. An additional grant of \$30,000 was received in May, and WIA is suspending new applications until it determines the amount remaining after six recent applications. Thrush said WIA is looking for new funding opportunities.

- Common Area Director Steve Cutler said that the sprinkler system at The Barn community center would be shut down at the end of the month, common area fire mitigation is continuing, and work on common area trails would be done as weather permits, pending contractor availability.
- Bush said that a new Woodmoor Public Safety WPS vehicle had been rear-ended and was out of commission until repairs were completed. He also noted that a bench in the Fairplay Drive median had been destroyed by a car and would be covered by insurance and replaced as soon as possible.
- Bush said that a draft budget for WIA had been presented at the executive session ahead of the board meeting and is available to consider until the Nov. 15 board meeting, at which time the board will be asked to approve it. The budget sets salaries, expenses, and income for the year and will drive next year's annual assessment rate. Once approved, the 2024 budget can be found at www.woodmoor.org/budget-statements.

The WIA Board of Directors usually meets at 7 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month in The Barn at 1691 Woodmoor Drive, Monument. The next meeting has been moved to Nov. 15 due to the holiday.
The WIA calendar can be found at www.woodmoor.org/wia-calendar/. WIA board meeting minutes can be found at www.woodmoor.org/meeting-minutes/ once approved and posted.
JackieBurhanscanbereachedatjackieburhans@ocn.me

September Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel
October was again warmer than average with below-normal precipitation. Almost the entire month saw quiet and dry weather, with exceptions at the beginning and end. Overall for the year, we are still above normal from a precipitation perspective, so hopefully that will continue through the winter and spring. And given that we have an El Niño pattern set up in the Pacific, there is a higher-than-normal chance of above-normal snowfall, especially later into winter and through the spring. Let's hope this pattern plays out.
The other nice aspect of the quiet weather most of the month was that the sunny skies, warm days, and cool nights were perfect for the development of fall colors. This resulted in a nice progression of fall colors as we moved through the month and no storms or strong winds coming through to freeze the leaves or blow them away too quickly.
The month started off mild with highs in the mid-70s on the 1st and 2nd. This warmth also helped to produce some last remnants of summer-type weather, with thunderstorms developing during the late afternoon and early evening of the 2nd. These produced some quick rainfall accumulations of nearly a half inch in spots. However, for most of us, this was our last measurable precipitation for several weeks until the 28th. The only exception were some showers of both rain and snow at times from the afternoon of the 11th off and on through the morning of the 13th. This was an extended dry period even for a time of the year when quiet weather conditions are common.
The quiet pattern was finally broken starting on the 26th and continuing through the 29th. The first change was signified by a cold front that blew through during the late afternoon of the 26th bringing cooler air, low clouds, fog, and a few flurries. After this initial push, cool and quiet weather took hold on the 27th before a stronger push of cold air and moisture

moved in on the 28th. This second, stronger cold front was overrun by moisture and lifted aloft. This allowed the atmosphere to moisten up and, when combined with the upslope flow, produced widespread snow from the 28th through the afternoon of the 29th.
Temperatures were well below normal as well with highs dropping from the low 70s on the 26th to the low 40s on the 27th and low 30s on the 28th. Bands of snow began to develop during the afternoon of the 28th and continued off and on through the 29th. This system was different than our typical snow events because it was driven by strong winds and rising motion high in the atmosphere combined with cold air at the surface. This resulted in a wide range of snowfall totals over relatively short distances. Temperatures were coldest on the 29th through the morning of the 30th, as highs struggled to reach 20 degrees and morning lows dipped all the way to the single digits above and below on the 30th. Sunshine returned to end the month, but the clear skies and lingering snow meant a cold start to each day, and also kept afternoon temperatures below average through Halloween.
A look ahead
November is generally dry and cool around the region.

We usually get several light snowfalls interspersed with sunny skies. Gusty winds commonly develop on a couple of days as the jet stream becomes more active and directly affects Colorado. High temperatures average in the upper 40s early in the month to low 40s by the end with overnight lows often dipping into the teens and single digits.
October 2023 Weather Statistics

Average High	62.0° (+2.5°)
100-year return frequency value max	67.7° min 50.7°
Average Low	31.2° (+1.9°)
100-year return frequency value max	36.8° min 26.4°
Monthly Precipitation	0.41" (-1.12")
100-year return frequency value max	4.63" min 0.18"
Monthly Snowfall	3.6" (-7.4")
Highest Temperature	78° on the 20th
Lowest Temperature	-1° on the 30th
Season to Date Snow	3.6" (-7.4")
	(the snow season, Oct 1 to Sept 30)
Season to Date Precip.	24.26" (+2.74")
	(the precipitation season, Jan 1 to Dec 31)
Heating Degree Days	570
Cooling Degree Days	0

Bill Kappel can be reached at billkappel@ocn.me.

Letters to Our Community

Guidelines for letters are on page 23.
Disclaimer: The information and opinions expressed in Letters to Our Community are the responsibility of the letter writers and should not be interpreted as the views of OCN even if the letter writer is an OCN volunteer. The letters are arranged in alphabetical order based on the last name of the author.

Tom Olmstead? No thanks
I am very concerned about Tom Olmstead's candidacy for the D38 school board. Olmstead's appearance at the KOAA forum revealed a lack of qualifications and understanding, and an obsessed focus on personal grievances. I will not be voting for him.
Olmstead's forum performance was marked by a stunning lack of preparedness. He seemed unfamiliar

with the initiatives of the school district and offered only third-hand anecdotes to support his vague goals. It’s clear he put minimal effort into understanding the responsibilities of the board, or even how meetings function (it seemed like he’s never attended one). Rather than addressing concrete issues, his focus was railing against perceived issues such as “indoctrination” by teachers’ unions or gender issues, deeply divisive stances that detract from real issues at hand.

When Olmstead cited a student suicide, he admitted he didn’t know any details, and he didn’t connect it to any concrete proposal. When he referred to a rumored incident of a student’s sexual misconduct, he suggested that elected board members should be involved in disciplining individual students (completely inappropriate) and—despite not knowing any of the details—put the involved students’ safety and privacy at risk. This level of ignorance and carelessness is unacceptable for someone seeking to influence the inner workings of our schools.

Tom Olmstead’s candidacy falls far short of our community’s needs, and what I want for schools I send my children to. The role of a school board member requires a deep commitment to education, a solid understanding of the challenges facing our district, and a proactive approach to policymaking. Unfortunately, Tom Olmstead has not demonstrated any of these qualities and appears more interested in settling personal grievances and promoting divisive ideologies. I urge my neighbors against a vote for Tom Olmstead.

Jeremy Borgia

Vote for Tom Olmstead

In an effort to reach anyone interested in finding out the truth about Tom Olmstead—who is running for the D38 school board—please read carefully.

I am a regular member of a group that sits at Serrano’s coffee shop (several times a week) with Tom. I and the members of that group (roughly 10-12 people) have known Tom for several years now and will attest to the fact that what has been published in OCN and Nextdoor by his competition is absolutely not accurate!

If you would consider getting to know Tom for

yourself, please stop by Serrano’s any weekday around 8:30 or 9 in the morning and learn for a fact what type of person he is and what positive new blood he would bring to the school board.

He will be happy to converse and answer questions about the issues facing the board and will not become involved in the character defamation approach being used by his opponents for the position on the board.

In my opinion, anyone affected by the D38 school board would benefit greatly from a face-to-face meeting with Tom.

Michael A. Graczyk

Protesting no parking signs at Pike National Forest

I live in unincorporated Monument and have been walking daily in the Pike National Forest, which is administrated by the U.S. Forest Service. The entrance to this is on Sunburst Drive. Due to my health issues (and that of many other disabled and veterans that use these paths), I have driven to the entrance and parked out front, off the road as did most of the people. Users (and there were hundreds) walked, biked and some had their dogs “walk” them. Anyway, some nut job just ordered No Parking signs installed in front, with a statement that violators would be towed. There is plenty of room between the paved road and the fenced park. That area is primarily gravel, but there is some grass, which is mowed.

This is a small area, maybe 10 acres. The no parking is in front now but not on the other three sides. When I questioned the logic of this, I received 6,600 views on Nextdoor, the local online posting site. I have been told that a hot car might ignite the dry grass. Problem is that these trails are over 50 years old, and there has never been a fire. Worse, now we park around the corner, where there is tall, dry grass—I agree that is a problem. I don’t know what the No Parking signs costs, but the solution, supposedly, is to put down gravel. For the area I am speaking of, this can’t be more than a few hundred dollars. Shouldn’t common sense prevail?

Kent Jarnig

100% VA disabled

Tom Olmstead has my vote

Thank God one of our school board candidates is out and about in our community meeting people! Tom Olmstead has my vote as he’s directly been engaging the public about his ideas and drive to make D38 a great experience for all our children.

Tom makes no bones that he believes parents have the right to what their children see and learn in the district and is driven by his law enforcement background to keep our schools safe. He understands that not every student wants to go to college, and he supports trade schools as a positive alternative to college. Tom is not in favor of tax hikes—particularly for the people in Monument who are on a fixed income. But he also supports teacher pay raises and believes we’ve not given enough attention to innovative ideas to make that happen.

D38 needs a person who wants to see this community thrive! Tom Olmstead has my vote.

Sherry E. MacDonald

Why a ban on political yard signs?

What in the world is going on with Monument’s Town Council? They’ve put a ban on political yard signs. Come on!

Last night, I attended an emergency meeting to reverse the ban. It was all just a political charade.

Instead, the Monument mayor and other elected officials doubled down, dug their heels in, and chastised the community for wanting the never-before-enforced ordnance reversed.

I’ve lived in this community for 20 years. Political yard signs clutter our neighborhoods for sure, but they’re a Constitutional right to freedom of political speech!

And in a nutshell, political signs are the way we become educated about our upcoming elections.

Did you know there are two candidates running for D38 school board. I’ve met Tom Olmstead—he’s exactly what we need on our school board today.

Let’s pass on the word—vote for Tom Olmstead for D38!

Gary Marner

Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

New fall releases

By the staff at Covered Treasures

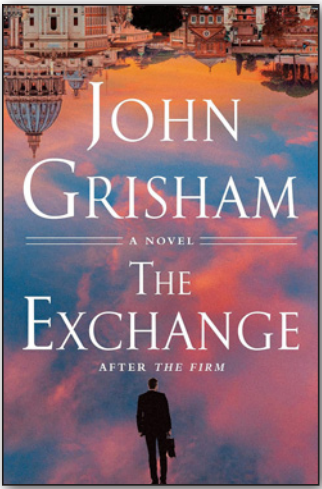
“Don’t wait until the fourth Thursday in November to sit with family and friends to give thanks. Make every day a day of thanksgiving”—Charmaine J. Forde

Here are some great new releases:

The Exchange: After the Firm

By John Grisham (Doubleday Books) \$30

What became of Mitch and Abby McDeere after they exposed the crimes of the Memphis law firm Bendini, Lambert & Locke and fled the country? The answer is in The Exchange, the riveting sequel to The Firm. Fifteen years later, Mitch and Abby are living in Manhattan, where Mitch is a partner at the largest law firm in the world. When a mentor in Rome asks him for a favor that will take him far from home, Mitch finds himself at the center of a sinister plot that has worldwide implications—and once again endangers his colleagues, friends, and family. Mitch has become a master at staying one step ahead of his adversaries, but this time there’s nowhere to hide.



The War of Words: How American GI Journalists Battled Censorship and Propaganda to Help Win World War II

By Molly Guptill Manning (Blackstone Publishing) \$26
A captivating story of how American troops in World War II wielded pens to tell their own stories as they made history. As the Axis blurred the lines between truth and fiction, the best defense was for American troops to bring the truth into focus by writing it down and disseminating it themselves. By war’s end, over 4,600 unique GI publications had been printed around the world. In newsprint, troops made sense of their hardships, losses, and reasons for fighting. These newspapers—by and for the troops—became the heart and soul of a unit. This stunning volume includes 14 pages of photographs and illustrations.

Going Infinite: The Rise and Fall of a New Tycoon

By Michael Lewis (Norton) \$30

This is the story of the spectacular collapse of the bit coin trading company known as FTX and Sam Bankman-Fried, the enigmatic founder at its center. Lewis takes readers on a wild ride through crypto’s gold rush, offering an education in high frequency trading, philanthropy, bankruptcy, and the justice system.

The Vaster Wilds

By Lauren Goff (Riverhead Books) \$28

A servant girl escapes from a colonial settlement in the wilderness, carrying nothing with her but her wits, a few possessions, and the spark of God that burns hot within her. What she finds is beyond the limits of her imagination and will bend her belief in everything her own civilization has taught her.

The Armor of Light

By Ken Follett (Viking) \$38

The long-awaited sequel to A Column of Fire, Follett’s latest book heralds a new dawn for Kingsbridge,

England, where progress clashes with tradition, class struggles to push into every part of society, and war in Europe engulfs the entire continent and beyond.

The Complete Mediterranean Cookbook: Over 200 Fresh, Health-Boosting Recipes (Complete Cookbook Edition)

By Coastal Kitchen (Cider Mill Press) \$34.95

The Coastal Kitchen believes that food is the easiest way to create the connection and meaning that we all need in our lives. To help build this foundation, the editors work to bring the very best recipes, techniques, and ideas from the culinary world into the home. The book contains over 200 recipes for bold entrees, sauces, sides, pastas, beans, veggies, meats, seafood, salads, and desserts. The easy-to-follow instructions are suitable for all skill levels.

To Infinity and Beyond: A Journey of Cosmic Discovery

By Neil de Grasse Tyson & Lindsey Nyx Walker (National Geographic Society) \$30

Drawing on mythology, history, and literature, Tyson and Walker bring planetary science down to earth and the principles of astrophysics within reach. In this entertaining book, illustrated with vivid photographs and art, readers travel through space and time, starting with the Big Bang and voyaging to the far reaches of the universe and beyond. Along the way, science greets pop culture as Tyson explains the triumphs—and bloopers—in Hollywood’s blockbusters: all part of an entertaining ride through the cosmos. For science junkies and fans of the conundrums that astrophysicists often ponder.

Until next month, happy reading.

The staff at Covered Treasures can be reached at books@ocn.me.

November Library Events

Program schedule change

By Harriet Halbig

The Monument Library will continue to offer Story Times on Tuesdays at 10:30 and Toddler Times on Wednesdays at 9:30 and 10 until Nov. 29, when Story Times at Monument will be suspended. But Family Story Times for all ages will continue to be offered at the Palmer Lake Library on Fridays at 10:30.

The Dungeons and Dragons Club for tweens ages 9

to 12 will meet on Dec. 1 from 4 to 5:30. No experience is required, and registration is preferred at 719-488-2370 or at ppld.org. Look under programs by location. There will be a teen escape room program on Saturday, Nov. 25 from 3 to 4 p.m. Registration is required. Bring a friend, have a snack and solve a mystery.

Saturday, Dec. 2, the library will offer a Device Drop-in Help Session for adults and seniors from 3

to 4 p.m. If you are having trouble with your laptop, smartphone, or tablet, bring it in and see if we can help. Please bring your device and power cord.

The Monument Library will close at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 22 and remain closed on Nov. 23 for Thanksgiving. The library will reopen on Friday the 24th.

Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me

Palmer Lake Historical Society, Oct. 19

History of Glen Eyrie presented

By Marlene Brown

The Palmer Lake Historical Society (PLHS) held its monthly meeting Oct. 19 at the Palmer Lake Town Hall. Amy Burch, manager of the bookstore at the Navigators located at Glen Eyrie and co-author of The Glen Eyrie Story, presented the story. The Navigators purchased the property in 1953 and continue to this day to house their headquarters for their worldwide ministry, castle tours, teas, overnight stays, conference center with a café and the bookstore. Many other events are allowed on the property. To book tours and for more information go to gleneyrie.org

Glen Eyrie was the home of William J. Palmer (1836-1909) and his wife “Queen” (1850-94). Palmer purchased the property at the mouth of the canyon in Garden of the Gods and began building Glen Eyrie for his wife in 1871. His vision was to build an English Tudor-style castle in wilds of the West, in the newly opened lands of Colorado. Palmer was a brigadier general in the Union Army, president of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad and founder of Colorado Springs. He had dreams of building Colorado Springs as the new Chicago or San Francisco. He founded Colorado College and built the first permanent build-

ing on campus that would eventually be downtown Colorado Springs. They had three daughters: Elsie, Dorothy, and Marjory.

As the railroad expanded and transportation to the West became easier, a train ran from Denver to Colorado Springs, opening trade between the two cities. Palmer Lake became a daily water stop. Palmer purchased the land known as the Monument Farms & Lake Property, which later become the Town of Palmer Lake. Palmer Lake was critical to the railroad because the steam engines chugged up to the Palmer Divide and had to take on water to head down. The

lake was the only natural water supply available on a year-round basis. Passenger trains would stop for 10 minutes to take on water. (See palmerdividehistory.org/a-brief-history-of-the-palmer-divide-area.)

When Queen Palmer’s health deteriorated, she and the girls moved back East and then back to England, where William visited them many times. At the age of 44, Queen passed away and William brought the girls back to Colorado Springs to live in the 33,000-square-foot castle. There were 17 guest rooms, two dining rooms and 24 fireplaces. The castle sits at the base of Queen’s Canyon and is subject to floods that increased after the 2012 Waldo Canyon fire. Though there was no fire damage to Glen Eyrie, the canyon was stripped of vegetation and over a million dollars of flood mitigation was performed with debris nets and concrete barriers to allow water to flow through the grounds of Glen Eyrie.

After Palmer’s horse-riding accident and his death three years later, his daughters tried to give Glen Eyrie to the city of Colorado Springs, but city officials declined due to cost of maintaining the property. It was sold in 1922, and the property fell into disrepair and was closed. In 1938, oilman George Strake bought the Glen Eyrie property and then remodeled and updated it until the sale to the Navigators in 1953.

For more information on William J. Palmer, you are invited to attend the

Palmer Lake Historical Society’s next meeting on Nov. 16, 7-8:30 p.m., for The Life and Times of General William Jackson Palmer presented by Jim Sawatzki, local author, and historian of the Palmer Divide area. The presentation is free and open to the public. The PLHS normally holds its meetings on the third Thursday of the month at the Palmer Lake Town Hall, 42 Valley Crescent St.,

Right: Amy Burch, manager of the bookstore at Glen Eyrie and co-author of *The Glen Eyrie Story*, gave a PowerPoint presentation to the Palmer Lake Historical Society on Oct. 19 at the Palmer Lake Town Hall. *Photo by Marlene Brown.*



High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG) November: Gardening goes indoors

By Janet Sellers

We had a long and wonderful Indian summer this year and only got some cold weather basically toward the end of October. Volunteers and I put the frost cloth on the garden beds at Tri-Lakes Cares and they did fine all month, doubling in size with the warm days and protected nights. Hopefully they'll last another few weeks.

I put most of my potted flowers at home on a rolling cart. That way they go in at night but out during the day. I think I will try some new techniques for overwintering my geraniums and petunias and other flowering plants. In a warmer climate they are perennials, but in our high desert mountain climate they are treated as annuals.

Some people I know have their potted fair-weather lemon trees indoors until next summer.

A lot of our potted plants can be brought indoors for safety and only things like a potted apple tree would need to be outside because it needs a certain amount of cold hours for blooms the next year. The pot has to be wrapped protected from severe cold to protect the roots inside as the garden ground soil would do, but the apple, cherry and other trees need the cold. I'll use a thick wrap of straw and then frost cloth, but many just dig a hole and plop the mulched potted tree into it, so the ground is the root protection.

How do you wrap trees to protect them from freezing?

Canopy.org recommends us to “cover susceptible trees and plants with burlap, sheets, tarps, etc., that extend to the ground to trap in the earth’s accumulated warmth. Use a frame or stakes to minimize contact between the cover and the foliage. Bring potted plants and trees to more protected locations.”

Also, wood chip mulch will protect from cold and keep in moisture. We aren’t supposed to bring apple, cherry, and other trees indoors. I didn’t get to the turf removal and mulching for my new pear trees until after our first snow in October. Hopefully all is well. My one little pear tree had a baby pear on it almost full size.

Some days in November will be in the 40s and higher, so we need to

keep an eye on temperatures and water some of our garden in the warm parts of the days. Underneath wood mulch or pine needle mulch, the tree roots will appreciate a drink while being protected.

In winter we can still grow windowsill foods. I have “zombie” romaine, celery, and scallions on my kitchen windowsill. The stubs from these market veggies will regrow in less than a month, sending out roots and shoots. They may not get as big in water as in soil, but they’ve each grown 6-10 inches tall.

Janet Sellers is an avid garden enthusiast. Share your handy planting tips—contact her at janetsellers@ocn.me.

Art Matters Enjoy our local art scene: walk, ride, or drive

By Janet Sellers

National Artist Sunday is in November

National Artist Sunday, the Sunday after Thanksgiving, is a time for the local community to engage with local artists—not only for their work but to visit with and enjoy them. We have many artists in our area that are not in our local venues but have fine art in many genres for sale.

Public art helps create community

We can see our local public art in sculptures along the Santa Fe Trail and places around our community. Dog walkers, runners, bike riders and many people going along the Santa Fe Trail see the wonderful sculpture art that we have there. We have a sculpture park at Second and Jefferson Streets in Monument and other spots around town, including the Monument Town Hall.

Audio for the local public art walk/ride tour

We can access the artists talking about their work at each sculpture via the

phone app known as OTOCAST at www.otocast.com. It’s simple to use the app. On it are stories about each artwork in the words of the artist. The recordings of the artists are updated frequently.

Local art shows in the gifting season

Bella Art and Frame Gallery—Over 25 artists show in this inclusive art format. Many beautiful genres are represented here, including Colorado landscapes, wildlife, impressionism, abstracts, as well as black and white and color fine art photography. Images are changed out often so the gallery has new works constantly. 251 Front St. No. 11, Monument.

Jefferson Studios—Daryl Muncey’s Jefferson Studios collection is getting so big, he’s adding another gallery space on the campus. On the alley off Second Street at 215 Chapala Plaza, Monument.

Palmer Lake Arts Council—Recently hosted several plays in the area and is also looking to encourage

local artists to submit their art for an artist’s call; deadline is Feb. 1, 2024. Public art displays are at Palmer Lake town offices and Palmer Lake Library. Selected art is on display for six months and is for sale.

Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts—Ray Shaw and Joe Beavers teamed up for Different Strokes, a fine art exhibition at the TLCA that opened Oct. 13. Shaw is an acclaimed wildlife painter who exhibits in fine galleries throughout the U.S. Beavers likes to utilize unusual media in his paintings as he experiments with his work. The pair will have a revolving, renewing exhibit for the next year in the Lucy Owens Gallery. 304 Highway 105, Palmer Lake

Janet Sellers is an artist, writer and thinker, showing her public and gallery artworks in the Tri-Lakes area and the West (see www.otocast.com). To include your art events, contact her at JanetSellers@ocn.me.



Above: A public art display is enjoyed by Kendra Burr, a Palmer Lake librarian, and Phil Wilkinson, a library visitor. They are viewing the rotating art exhibit at the Palmer Lake Library. Contact info@PLartscouncil.org for sale information. Next entry deadline is Feb. 1, 2024. Email request to Dennis: denbook@comcast.net. *Photo courtesy of Palmer Lake Arts Council.*

Snapshots of Our Community

October Issue Snapshot Correction: Mary Burnett (not Barrett) Brown is the author of The Book of Divine Love. OCN regrets the error.

TLWC help Creek Week, Sep. 30



Above: Tri-Lakes Women’s Club members participated in the 10th Annual Creek Week Cleanup on Sept. 30. Creek Week is the largest watershed-wide cleanup in the state, enlisting volunteers to pick up litter along creeks, trails, parks, and open spaces along the Fountain Creek Watershed. Armed with prongs to assist with trash pickup, the ladies were able to fill 15 bags of trash. *Photo by Maureen Morgan.*

Teacher wins \$50,000 prize, Oct. 3



Above: A local teacher has won a \$50,000 prize from Harbor Freight Tools. Andrew Vrieze teaches Industrial Design and Construction at Lewis-Palmer High School. He was given the Prize for Teaching Excellence on Oct. 3. The award is split between the school and Vrieze. He gets \$15,000, the school gets \$35,000. A total of \$1.5 million was awarded to 25 public high school skilled trades teachers and their programs across the United States. Vrieze is one of only three winners from Colorado. Vrieze says, “Every student should have a chance to learn the trades.” He continued, “The classes I teach help these individuals feel connected, have a voice in the school, and strength to help them in the future.” *Photo courtesy of Lewis-Palmer High School.*

Empty Bowls raises over \$10,000



Above: From left, Chief Business Officer Brett Ridgway, Assistant Superintendent Amber Whetstone, and board Treasurer Ron Schwarz serve soup to the 2023 Empty Bowls and Silent Auction attendees in the Lewis-Palmer High School Cafeteria on Oct. 4. The annual event is organized and staffed by the Kiwanis Club of Monument Hill with all proceeds benefiting Tri-Lakes Cares (TLC). Donations from businesses and restaurants, ceramic bowl artisans, and students make this event possible every year. Hundreds of people attended, raising over \$10,000 for TLC. TLC is a community-based, volunteer-supported resource center whose purpose is to improve people's lives through emergency and self-sufficiency programs. It operates the only food pantry in Northern El Paso County and relies on donations to operate. For more information, visit www.tri-lakescares.org or 719-481-4864 and www.monumenthillkiwanis.org or 719-488-2327. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

Station 4 Open House, Oct. 7



Above: From left, Sparky the Fire Dog and Violet, Andelyn, and Sawyer Hyatt visit the Cooking Safety information display during Monument Fire District's Meet the Firefighters open house event at Station 4 on Oct. 7. Sparky says cooking safety starts with you! For more fire safety information, and fire safety fun for the whole family, visit www.sparkyschoolhouse.org and www.sparky.org. *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*

Pumpkin give-away, Oct. 14



Above: From left at rear, Firefighter/Paramedic Jon Bauer, firefighter Andrew Robinson, Lt. Curt Leonhardt, Dianna Goodfellow, Engineer Keegan Black, Julie Black, Battalion Chief Janaka Branden, Lt. Jon Urban, Engineer Golden Rains, Paramedic John Hoeh, Lt. Steve Buckner, Battalion Chief Shannon Balvanz, Carolyn Leonhardt, Sparky the Dog, Isaac, Caleb and Riley Black at the Sixth Annual Monument Local 4319 Pumpkin Giveaway at Monument Marketplace on Oct. 14. Dianna Goodfellow of Mutual Security Mortgage Ltd., an Erie resident, organizes and sponsors the free event, traveling to Cooksey Farms in Roggen with a few firefighters and their families to hand cut and gather the donated pumpkins. The group delivered 777 pumpkins to the Monument Marketplace Clocktower, and with the help of other Local 4319 members, the pumpkins were positioned for the event. Attendees experienced a live performance from local country artist Colton Hittle and voted for their favorite carved/decorated pumpkin in the Third Annual Monument Fire District firefighter pumpkin decorating competition. About 888 pounds of canned food donations were collected for the Tri-Lakes Cares food pantry. *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*

Right: The volunteer group at Cooksey Farms, Roggen, is, from left, Firefighter Jaylon Koehn, Engineer Keegan Black, Julie Black, Firefighter/Paramedic Nathan Boyce, McKinley Thorpe, Dianna Goodfellow, rear from left, Caleb, Riley, and Isaac Black. *Photo by Engineer Jody Thorpe.*



PLAG small works show, Oct. 6



Above: Palmer Lake Art Group celebrated its annual small works show opening at Bella Art and Frame gallery on Oct. 6. Members of the club are shown near their paintings with first-place winner Mark Dixon at the far right. Artworks are up and for sale through November. Sold work will be replaced by the artists with new work, so the show will be full and renewed with artworks throughout the exhibition and sale. *Photo by Janet Sellers.*

Romance at the Chautauqua, Oct. 6



Above: Palmer Lake arts district presented playwright Richard Sebastian-Coleman at the premier of the play *Romance at the Chautauqua* on the weekend of Oct. 6 at Palmer Lake Town Hall. Centered on the town of Palmer Lake, the story moved forward in a creative way to include the town's history and famous people, including Lucretia Vaile and Gen. William Jackson Palmer. True to the melodrama genre, the audience was encouraged to engage in making specific sounds for each actor such as boos, woos, and cheers. After the melodrama ended, the crowd was treated to a contemporary musical medley by the actors that included dancing, songs, and chorus, and the audience participated in these songs as well by singing, whistling along, and more. Up next will be *The Stinky Cheese Man & Other Fairly Stupid Tales* coming to Palmer Lake on Nov. 11. For tickets, see www.funkylittletheater.org. *Photo by Janet Sellers.*

AARP honors pastor, president



Black Forest Lutheran Church Pastor Ken Hohag and AARP Chapter 1100 President Candace Lehmann were honored Oct. 11 at the chapter meeting in Black Forest. Hohag was given the Colorado Outstanding Community Partner Award for 2023 and Lehmann got the Outstanding Volunteer Service Award. The honors were presented by Colorado AARP President Greg Glischinski and Jeremiah Mora, state and community engagement manager for AARP Colorado. During the business meeting that followed, plans were finalized for participating in the Oct. 21 Senior Life Expo in Colorado Springs.

Above Left: From left are Hohag, Mora, and Glischinski. Above Right: From left are Glischinski, Lehmann, and Mora. *Photos by Stan Beckner.*

Trinity Community Park opens

Right: After 13 new pieces of state-of-the-art accessible playground equipment were installed, along with a shock-absorbing surface to make it easier for wheelchairs, strollers, and walkers to get around, Trinity Community Park opened to the public in Monument on Oct. 14. The new equipment also included a wheelchair trampoline and a wheelchair merry-go-round. More than 70 volunteers from Trinity Lutheran Church and the Monument and Colorado Springs communities helped. This is the largest and most advanced American Disabilities Act-compliant park within 40 miles. While much of the equipment is specifically designed for those with special needs, everyone is welcome regardless of ability. Next spring, a pavilion and additional signs and landscaping will be added. Most of the work will be paid for by corporate sponsors and grants. In the photo, Brad Gann and his special-needs daughter Siobhan explore the motion of the wheelchair trampoline. *Photo by Sharon Gann*



Awake the Lake 0.5K, Oct. 15



Above: About 900 humans and 60 dogs signed up for the ninth annual 0.5K “Race” at Palmer Lake on Oct. 15. As usual, donuts for humans and tennis balls and treats for dogs were provided at the halfway point and a beer or soft drink could be had after crossing the finish line. Prizes were awarded for the best costumes. Money raised at the event by Awake the Lake helps pay for park beautification, landscaping, fireworks on the Fourth of July, holiday lighting, and helping keep water in the lake. *Photo by Steve Pate.*

Burns receives award, Oct. 17



Above: St. Peter Catholic School Office Administrator and Director Carol Burns received the Hometown Hero award on Oct. 17. Burns received the award in recognition of her accomplishments and contributions to the St. Peter and Monument communities. The award was presented by Modern Woodmen of America representative Luke Rawlings. From left are Superintendent of Catholic Education for the diocese of Colorado Springs Sheila Whalen, Rawlings, Burns, and school Principal Debbie Brook. *Photo courtesy of Robin Sheehan.*

Business Expo, Oct. 18



Above: The 2023 Community and Business Expo sponsored by the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce and the YMCA was held Oct. 18 at the YMCA with nearly 45 businesses showcased. The free event drew more than 300 attendees. Businesses included services, products, and local nonprofits. For more information for events presented by the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce, visit www.trilakeschamber.com. *Photo by Marlene Brown.*

TLWC get CPR training, Oct. 18



Above: Nearly two dozen members of Tri-Lakes Women’s Club (TLWC) took CPR training on Oct. 18. The training held at Monument Fire Department (MFD) Station 1 gave the women a chance to experience CPR but was not for certification. Trainers came from University of Colorado Health’s RN Cardiac Care Coordinators as well as EMS technicians and firefighters from the Monument Fire District. In the photo, Lt. John Bodinsky instructs TLWC member Gail Wittman on how to use a device connected to the CPR dummy that gives feedback on the correct speed and depth to treat a victim. *Photo by Sue Leggiero.*

Black Forest Trails Association board



Above: The Black Forest Trails Association (BRTA) held its annual membership meeting Oct. 16 at the Black Forest Community Center. Members voted for their new board. Pictured from left, standing, are Cimarron Hatch (secretary), Gordon Limb (board), Karen Popham (board), John Wallace (president), and Gary Sherwood (board). Seated from left are Cheryl Pixley (vice president) and Nancy Reinhardt (board). Board members not present are Alex Nguyen (treasurer) and Jack Yonce (board). BFTA is a nonprofit organization that works with El Paso County to connect Black Forest neighborhoods with the county Trail System for non-motorized use. BFTA’s next meeting will be Nov. 6 at 6:30 p.m. at Black Forest Community Hall. For more information, go to www.blackforesttrails.org. *Caption by Marlene Brown. Photo by Judith von Ahlefeldt.*

100+ Women Who Care, Oct. 18



Above: On Oct. 18, 100+ Women Who Care of Tri-Lakes gathered at the Woodmoor Barn to hear from three nominees for its bi-annual grant. The nominees include Tri-Lakes Cares, a community resource center; Trinity Community Park, an accessible park; and Hilltop Ranch, a residential community for adults with disabilities. Hilltop Ranch, in Palmer Lake, provides a living community for adults with disabilities as well as weekend respite care. More information can be found at www.hilltopranch.org. Monument Warriors provided refreshments and talked about supporting their Special Olympics athletes with the grant they received in April. Cathy Wilcox, pictured, addressed the members of 100+ Women Who Care Tri-Lakes, who each contribute \$100 two times a year to local Tri-Lakes nonprofits. For information, contact <https://www.100womenwhocaretrilakes.com/join-us/>. Find more information about Tri-Lakes Cares at www.tri-lakescares.org; and Trinity Community Park at www.trinitymonument.org/trinity-community-park. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

Holz Hausen in Palmer Lake



Above and below: All Pat Duffy wanted to find was a faster method of drying firewood for his wood stove. He ended up with a work of art. Duffy’s research turned up the German method of stacking wood called Holz Hausen. The wood is stacked in a circular shape that supports itself on the outside, allowing him to fill the inside with more wood. This speeds the drying process. He got the wood by cutting down nearly 40 pine trees, each as high as 65 feet, in Douglas County. Building his Holz Hausen was a learning curve. The first one fell down. But he got the hang of it, and now he has four stacks in his yard in Palmer Lake. The largest stack is 9 feet tall and 10 feet wide and contains 6.5 cords of wood. Functional and, he says, “It looks really cool.” *Photos by Michael Weinfeld.*



Black Forest Backyard Market



Above: The Black Forest Backyard Market continued what is considered a very successful season on Oct. 21. The market, on the corner of Black Forest and Shoup Roads, featured local farmers, a kids' corner, and young entrepreneurs. Products included jewelry, soaps, mushrooms, vegetables, and baked goods. Each booth's offerings were locally produced and grown. Pictured are the managers of the market for the last four years. As the season ends on Oct. 28, they are ramping up for the winter market. For more information, go to www.thebackyardmarkets.com/holiday-markets. Photo by Marlene Brown.

WMMI Miners' Pumpkin Patch



Above: The Western Museum of Mining & Industry (WMMI) held its annual Miners' Pumpkin Patch on Saturdays throughout October. Attendees could choose from a multitude of activities. Gold panning, outdoor games, hayrides, riding a soap box derby car, watching the operation of a variety of museum equipment, indoor museum tours and, of course, picking out a special pumpkin or two for Halloween and catapulting one were among the activities. On Oct. 21, WMMI Executive Director Gant Dewey said, "It's a perfect fall day, visitors are enjoying the pumpkin patch, and the running of the museum's equipment really makes this a unique experience." Over 4,000 visitors attended the Pumpkin Patch through the first three Saturdays. Photo by David Futey.

Snowy Halloween?



Above: I'm dreaming of a white ... Halloween? People in the Tri-Lakes area woke up to several inches of snow on Oct. 29. The snow gave beards or hats to ghosts and goblins. Lucky for trick-or-treaters, the weather was forecast to be in the 40s on All Hallows Eve. Photo by Michael Weinfeld.

Colorado Kids Ranch Pumpkin Patch



Above: After working with the El Paso Board of County Commissioners to increase its parking, the Colorado Kids Ranch presented Colorado Pumpkin Patch again this year. Families from Denver to Colorado Springs came to enjoy an afternoon of fun for everyone on Oct. 21. The fun included tractor hayrides, huge bouncy pillows, tube swings, and pumpkins. The family farm operates a non-profit 501c3 Johnny Pumpkinseed that offers free admission and free pumpkins to families in-need and children of special needs. For more information on year-round events, go to <https://coloradokidsranch.com/activities>. Photo by Marlene Brown.

MA boys cross country wins title



Above: Monument Academy Middle School's boys cross country team are the champs. They won the state title at the Colorado State Middle School Cross Country Meet at Fehringer Ranch Park in Denver on Oct. 21. They competed as a small 1a/2a school in the Blue Division against 4a/5a schools across the state. The boys team went undefeated this season and the full team of 49 kids won their league championship for both the boys and girls teams. From left are Preston Hall, Isaac Hawkins, Lukas Sturgeon, Ben Olds, Axel Mason, Tegegn Hall, and George Paulson. Photo by Patrick Hall.

Ascent Church Trunk or Treat



Above: At the Ascent Church parking lot, the trunk or treat event included a pirate ship complete with kids walking the plank to get their treats. Some celebrants shared candies and fun wearing '90s vintage attire at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Trunk or treat is a fun and safe fall celebration. Many local churches and organizations offer it. Photo by Janet Sellers.

Support Our Community
Advertise in OCN!

Our Community News (OCN), with a circulation of over 23,400, is a unique all-volunteer monthly newspaper mailed FREE to every resident and business in the Tri-Lakes area. OCN is a primary source for Tri-Lakes area news that gives advertising preference to Tri-Lakes and Black Forest businesses. OCN's contract-free low ad rates and monthly publication schedule help stretch your ad budget while supporting an important Tri-Lakes-focused effort to present factual, comprehensive news to all Tri-Lakes area residents and business owners.

For advertising information, contact John Heiser, (719) 488-3455, ads@ocn.me, or visit www.ocn.me.

Our Community Notices

By Janet Sellers

Although we strive for accuracy in these listings, dates or times are often changed after publication. Please double-check the time and place of any event you wish to attend by calling the information number for that event. Please notify us if your event listing needs to be updated.

Community volunteers

Many students need volunteer hours for scouting, civics classes, or other clubs volunteering hours. Friends of Fox Run Park will have some openings for student volunteers (and grownups, too) most of the year.

Friends of Fox Run Park has openings for volunteers for various tasks. Besides tasks, the group offers information and skills demonstration for each 2-3 hour session, and celebrates volunteers at the park with the annual community holiday cheer/ ornament party in December. The Tri Lakes Cares on-site Garden in Monument needs volunteers in Fall, Spring and Summer. Gardening tasks include preparing garden beds, weeding, sowing seeds, and developing the compost. Bring gardening gloves, some tools will be provided on the work-days. Contact Janet Sellers at [\[ers@ocn.me\]\(mailto:ers@ocn.me\) or Marlene Brown at \[MarleneBrown@ocn.me\]\(mailto:MarleneBrown@ocn.me\) for more information.

MVEA outage notifications

Please add your phone number to your MVEA account to streamline outage reporting and restoration notifications. To report an outage please call or text "OUT" to \(800\) 388-9881. Visit MVEA's Outage Center before the storm. There is information about preparing for outages, electrical safety, outage reporting, a link to the outage map, and more.

Get Help in Larkspur

Larkspur Church has a Food Bank and Care](mailto:JanetSell-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Center that offer a good variety of non-perishable food items, as well as clothing for men, women, and children, some household items available too. We're here to help. If you are in need, or know someone who is, please reach out to Jeff at gethelp@larkspur.church. If you would like to donate contact Jeff by the same email to arrange a pick up.

The Sunflower is for people with non-visible disabilities

Watch for green and yellow sunflower lanyards, bracelets, and ribbons, discreet ways to make the invisible visible. Wearing the Sunflower discreetly indicates to people

around the wearer including staff, colleagues and health professionals that they need additional support, help or a little more time. However big or small, your help moves us closer to a society where people recognize that an offer of help, understanding and kindness can make a huge difference to the daily experiences that a Sunflower wearer has. For more information: www.flydenver.com/accessibility, www.hdsunflower.com/us/, and www.disabled-world.com/disability/types/invisible/.

Tri-Lakes Cares needs your support

Tri-Lakes Cares is the only food pantry and human services organization serving northern El Paso County through emergency relief and self-sufficiency programs. The community-based, volunteer-supported center is a critical resource for our neighbors in need. The best way to help support Tri-Lakes Cares is to donate. Visit <https://tri-lakescares.org/donate> to learn how to donate money, medical items, personal supplies, or food. Please check the web for current needs in our food pantry at <https://tri-lakescares.org/donate/current-needs>. Donation drop-off hours are Mon.-Thu., 9 am-4 pm. For more information about Tri-Lakes Cares or how you can help, contact Tri-Lakes Cares at 719-481-4864 or info@tri-lakescares.org.

Silver Key at Tri-Lakes Senior Center

Silver Key at Tri-Lakes Senior Center, formerly known as the Tri-Lakes Silver Alliance Senior Center, has been providing

exciting programs and activities to area seniors who have a zest for fun and learning. As the older adult population is growing, our services are in high demand. 719-884-2300 66 Jefferson St, Monument.

Can you volunteer today?

- **Links to local organizations** with an immediate need for volunteers are listed on the county's website, www.elpasocountyhealth.org/volunteering-and-donations, for groups like Care and Share, Crossfire Ministries, blood donations, Early Connections (volunteer from home opportunity), foster an animal, Medical Reserve Corps of El Paso County, Salvation Army, Silver Key, and United Way (ongoing opportunities).
- **The Colorado State University Extension office** in El Paso County has several opportunities for individuals interested in volunteering. <https://elpaso.extension.colostate.edu/volunteer-opportunities/>
- **El Paso County volunteer-based and nonprofit organizations** are committed to building healthy, caring communities and rely on the hard work of individuals like you. Reach out today and find out how you can play a part by becoming a volunteer in El Paso County. Get involved in El Paso County volunteering non-profits and organizations! <https://www.>

americantowns.com/el-paso-county-co/volunteer-organizations/.

- **The El Paso County Sheriff's Office** Volunteer Program is composed of a collective citizens group with a true and common desire to partner with the El Paso County Sheriff's Office by volunteering their services while learning more about the internal workings of the law enforcement community. <https://www.epc-sheriffsoffice.com/volunteer-program-0>.
- **The El Paso County Volunteer Program** is a wonderful opportunity for citizens to learn about the various functions of county government as well as give back to the community. The County's numerous boards and commissions need your experience, talents and time. <https://bocc.elpasoco.com/volunteer>.
- **Children's Literacy Center** provides free one-on-one literacy tutoring to Tri-Lakes children in grades 1-6 who are reading below grade level! Tutoring is at the Tri-Lakes Senior Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:30-6:30 pm, and our Summer Session will run through Aug. 14. For more information, to become a volunteer tutor or to enroll your child, visit www.childrensliteracycenter.org or email Christine Jeffson at Christine@childrensliteracycenter.org.

Our Community Calendar

By Janet Sellers

Although we strive for accuracy in these listings, dates or times are often changed after publication. Please double-check the time and place of any event you wish to attend by calling the info number for that event. Please contact calendar@ocn.me with changes and additions.

GOVERNMENTAL BODIES

- Forest Lakes Metropolitan District, Pinon Pines Metropolitan District 1, 2 & 3 board meeting. Typically meets quarterly on the first Mon., 4 pm Meetings are held via teleconference. For virtual joining instructions and updates see www.forestlakesmetro-district.com.
- Monument Town Council meeting, Mon., Nov. 6 (the Nov. 20 meeting has been canceled), 6:30 pm, Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Normally meets first and third Mon. Info: 719-884-801, www.townofmonument.org/260/Board-of-Trustees for remote attendance links.
- El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) regular meeting, usually every Tue., 9 am. View agendas and meetings at www.agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso. Meetings are held at Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade Ave., Suite 150, Colo. Springs. Info: 719-520-643. During November a BOCC meeting is also scheduled for 9am on Nov. 30th. BOCC land use meetings in November are scheduled to be held on Nov. 9th and 30th at 1pm in Centennial Hall.
- El Paso County Planning Commission meeting, Thu., Nov. 2 & 16, 9 am Regional Development Center, 2880 International Circle, Colo. Springs. Meetings are live-streamed on the El Paso County News & Information Channel at <https://www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel>. Normally meets first & third Thu. (as required). Info: 719-520-6300, <https://planningdevelopment.elpasoco.com/2023-meetings/>
- Palmer Lake Board of Adjustments, Tue., Nov. 7, 5 pm, 28 Valley Crescent St., Palmer Lake. Normally meets first Tues., as needed.
- Woodmoor Water & Sanitation District board meeting, Mon., Nov. 13, 1 pm, 1845 Woodmoor Dr., Monument. Normally meets second Mon. Info: 719-488-2525, www.woodmoorwater.com.
- Tri-Lakes Wastewater Facility Joint Use Committee meeting, Tue., Nov. 14, 10 am 16510 Mitchell Ave. Meets second Tue. Info: See <https://tlwastewater.com/index.html> Bill Burks, 719-481-4053.
- Lewis-Palmer School District 38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee (formerly DAAC), Tue., Nov. 14, 6-8 pm, Monument Academy West Campus, 1150 Village Ridge Pt., Monument. Meets six times a year. Usually meets monthly on second Tue. Contact info: tmckee@lewispalmer.org.
- Palmer Lake Sanitation District board meeting, Wed., Nov. 8, 9 am, call-in only: 650-479-3208, Access Code 76439078, 120 Middle Glenway. Meets second Wed. Info: 719-481-2732. www.plsd.org.
- Monument Planning Commission meeting, Wed., Nov. 8, 6 pm Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Usually meets the second Wed. To see the options for remote public participation in each meeting, visit www.townofmonument.org/263/Planning-Commission-Board-of-Adjustment. Info: 719-884-8028. www.townofmonument.org.
- Monument Academy School Board, Thu., Nov. 9, 6:30 pm, East Campus gym, 4303 Pinehurst Circle. Usually meets the second Thu. Info: 719-431-8001, www.monumentacademy.net/school-board.
- Palmer Lake Board of Trustees meeting, Thu., Nov. 9, 5 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent, Usually meets second and fourth Thu. Info: 719-481-2953. www.townofpalmerlake.com.
- Monument Sanitation District board meeting, Wed., Nov. 15, 9 am, 130 Second St. Zoom meeting. Find joining instructions on the website. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-4886, www.colorado.gov/msd.
- Palmer Lake Town Planning Commission meeting, Wed., Nov. 15, 6 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-2953, www.townofpalmerlake.com.
- Academy Water and Sanitation District board meeting, Wed., Nov. 15, 6 pm. Usually meets third Wed. Public can join the Skype meeting: <https://join.skype.com/PACujKTn7Nrh>. Check the website for a link: <https://academywsd.colorado.gov/notices-and-alerts>. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-0711, <https://academywsd.colorado.gov>.
- Monument Fire District board meeting, in person or via Zoom, Wed., Nov. 15, 6:30 pm., Station 1, 18650 Highway 105, Monument. Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining instructions at <http://www.monumentfire.org>, or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin, at 719-484-0911.
- Donald Wescott Fire Protection District meeting, Wed., Nov. 15, 4:30 pm, Pension Board of Trustees meeting 4 p.m. Station 1, 18650 Highway 105 Monument. Normally meets every other month on the fourth Wed. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining

- instructions at <http://www.monumenfire.org> or contact Jennifer Martin, at 719-484-0911
- Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District board meeting, in person or via Zoom, Wed., Nov. 15, 7 pm, Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining instructions at www.bffire.org or contact Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn at 719-495-4300. Meetings are usually held on the third Wednesday.
 - Woodmoor Improvement Association Board Meeting, Wed., Nov. 15, 7 pm, Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. The WIA Board usually meets fourth Wed. Info: 719-488-2693, www.woodmoor.org.
 - El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority meeting, Thu., Nov. 16, 9 am Monument Town Hall Boardroom, 645 Beacon Lite Rd. Meets third Thu. Info: 719-488-3603. www.loopwater.org.
 - Donala Water & Sanitation District board meeting, Thu., Nov. 16, 1:30 pm, 15850 Holbein Dr. In 2023, meets third Thu., Check the website for the access code for the electronic meeting. Info: 719-488-3603, www.donalawater.org.
 - Triview Metropolitan District board meeting, Thu., Nov. 16, 5:30 pm, 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302, Monument. Normally meets third Thu. Info: 719-488-6868, www.triviewmetro.com.
 - Lewis-Palmer School District 38 board meeting, Mon., Nov. 27, 6-10 pm. Normally meets third Mon. The Board of Education meeting will be live-streamed on the district's YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/LPSDCommunity, agenda, and supporting documents at <https://go.boarddocs.com/co/lewispalmer/Board.nsf/vpublic>. Contact Vicki Wood. Phone: 719.481.9546 Email: vwood@lewispalmer.org Website: <https://www.lewispalmer.org>.

WEEKLY & MONTHLY EVENTS

- AARP Local Senior Social, fourth Wed., 12455 Black Forest Rd. Info: www.aarpchapter1100blackforest.weekly.com.
- A.A. Big Book Study, every Thu., 7 pm, Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 W. Baptist Rd. Call 425-436-6200, access code 575176#.
- Alcoholics Anonymous, every Tue. & Thu., 7:30 p.m. Black Forest Lutheran Church, 12455 Black Forest Road, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80908. AA is a fellowship of people who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. Join us with your questions. Info: bfllc@bflchurch.org,
- Al-Anon for family and friends of alcoholics, every Tue. & Thu., 7:30 p.m. Black Forest Lutheran Church, 12455 Black Forest Road, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80908. Al-Anon members are people, just like you, who are worried about someone with a drinking problem. Join us with your questions. Info: bfllc@bflchurch.org
- Al-Anon Zoom Meeting, Just for Today Online, every Mon., 9-10 am Zoom Meeting ID: 889 4142 7446, Password 349309.
- Al-anon Meeting: Monument, every Thu., 7-8 pm, Ascent Church (formerly the Tri-Lakes Chapel), 1750 Deer Creek Rd., Monument. Info: MonumentSerenity@gmail.com.
- Al-Anon meeting: Letting Go, every Thu., 9-10:15 am at Ascent Church, 1750 Deer Creek Rd., Monument. For additional information go to www.al-anon-co.org.
- Amateur ham radio WØTLM (Tri-Lakes Monument ham radio Association), third Mon. All amateur ham radio operators or those interested in becoming one are welcome. Info: www.WØTLM.com.
- Benet Hill Monastery, Let us pray with you, walk in the forest, come up and visit prayer sites, every Sun. worship is 10:15 am, 3190 Benet Lane, 80921. See ad on page 3.
- Benet Hill Monastery, Half Day Prayer Group, first Sat., 9 am-12 pm. All vaccinated guests are welcome. Contact Sister Therese at (719) 355-1638 or (719) 355-1650 or stherese@benethillmonastery.org. See ad on page 3.
- Benet Hill Monastery, Centering Prayer Group, every Tue., 10-11 am. All vaccinated guests are welcome. Contact Sister Therese at (719) 355-1638 or (719) 355-1650 or stherese@benethillmonastery.org. See ad on page 3.
- AARP Black Forest #1100, second Wed., noon. All ages welcome. In-person, Black Forest Lutheran Church, 12455 Black Forest Rd.
- Black Forest Community Church, Centering Prayer Group, first Sat., 8:30-10 am The Old Log Church. Centering prayer opens and closes the meetings with discussion and fellowship in between; open to all. Contact Rev. Roger Butts, at 719-433-3135, for information.
- Children's Literacy Center, every Mon. & Wed., 5:30-6:30 pm. Provides free one-on-one literacy tutoring to Tri-Lakes children in grades 1-6 who are reading below grade level. Tutoring is at Grace Best Educa-

- tion Center, 66 Jefferson St. Monument. For more information, to become a volunteer tutor, or to enroll your child, visit www.childrensliteracycenter.org or contact Rachel Morin, Tri-Lakes Senior Center Coordinator, CLC 610-246-1047 (cell).
- Colorado Springs Philharmonic Guild Listening Club, third Wed. Free virtual event. Maestro Wilson will conduct monthly hour-long programs. RSVP at www.cspguild.org.
 - Essentrics Fitness Program at Senior Center, every Tue., 9 am & Thu., 10 am, Grace Best Education Center, 66 Jefferson St, Monument, CO 80132. Registration & info: Sue Walker, 719-330-0241, www.trilakes-seniors.org.
 - Fellowship of Christ Church, every Sun., 9 am. Monument Academy East Campus, 4303 Pinehurst Circle 80908. See ad on page 6.
 - Friends of Fox Run Park, Zoom meeting, fourth Thu., 7 pm, email friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com, they will email you the link the day of the meeting. Join the growing group to learn about volunteering and supporting the park for forest safety, trails, trees, education, special events, and more. Info: friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com.
 - Friends of Monument Preserve (FOMP) Trail Repair monthly Work Days, second Tue. Apr.-Oct. 5 pm. Meet at Mt Herman Trailhead at the corner of Mt Herman Rd and Nursery Rd, bring gloves. FOMP needs volunteers to help repair the trails in the National Forest Open Space surrounding the Monument Fire Center. The Forest Service recently completed the second phase of Fire Mitigation work and many of the social trails have been damaged. The Forest Service relies on FOMP to maintain these trails. Tools will be provided.
 - Fuel Church Griefshare, every Thu., 5:30-7:30 pm, 643 State Highway 105, Palmer Lake. Email info@fuel.org. 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake.
 - Fuel Church Sunday Service, every Sun. Service times, 11:00 am Live service streaming at www.fuelchurch.org at 11:40 am on www.fuelchurch.org. Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Nursery and kids' service. Non-denominational, spirit-filled. Need prayer? Email us at info@fuel.org. See ad on page 5.
 - German Conversation Group, every Mon., 1:30 pm, Monument Library, 1706 Woodmoor Drive. Public welcome with Intermediate to Advanced German speaking skills.
 - Gleneagle Sertoma, first and third Wed., 11:45 am to 1 pm at Beasts and Brews, 7 Spectrum Loop, Colorado Springs. The longest continuously serving civic service organization in northern El Paso County features a program speaker addressing local topics of interest. Info: Duane Gritzmaker, dwgritz@gmail.com or 719-649-9220.
 - Gleneagle Women's Club, membership luncheon, third Fri, Sep.-June, various venues, 12 activity groups, i.e., hiking, bridge, etc. Guests welcome. For information contact Susan Owen, 719-886-7110.
 - GriefShare Support Group, last Tue. of the month, 10:30 am-noon. NEW LOCATION: Tri-Lakes Senior Center, 66 Jefferson St. in the Grace Best Elementary School building. The Tri-Lakes Silver Alliance has partnered with Colorado Palliative and Hospice Care to host a 13-session grief support group in Monument. RSVP, info: Sue Walker, 719-330-0241.
 - La Leche League breastfeeding support group, second Mon., 7 pm. Partners and helpers welcome (and babies and kids, too) so we can meet our breastfeeding goals together. Black Forest Community Center 12530 Black Forest Rd, Colorado Springs, CO 80908. For more information, contact RachelKLangley@gmail.com.
 - Lions Club Bingo, every Sat. (except the first Sat.), 8:30 am-1 pm and first Mon., 5:30-10 pm Tri-Lakes Lions Club's portion of the proceeds benefit those in need in the Tri-Lakes community. Updated info and location: Jim Naylor, 719-481-8741 or www.trilakeslionsclub.org.
 - Monument Dementia Caregiver Support Group, second Sat., 9:45-11:15 am. Meets in Person, First National Bank Monument (581 Highway 105, Monument, CO 80132). Meets monthly, 2nd Sat. Contact: Registration is required, call 800-272-3900 or email khare@alz.org to register.
 - Monument Hill Kiwanis Club meeting, every Sat., 8 am. www.MHKiwanis.org, MonumentHillKiwanis@gmail.com for details, guests are welcome. Service leadership clubs, Key clubs, Builders Club, and K-kids at D38 schools. Memberships are open to the public. Info: RF Smith, 719-210-4987, www.MHKiwanis.org.
 - Monument Life Recovery Group, every Mon., 6:30-7:30 pm, The Ascent Church, 1750 Deer Creek Rd. This faith-based support group is for those seeking freedom from all hurts, habits, and hang-ups. Daycare for children under age 11. Info: 303-946-2659, www.liferecoverygroups.com/meetings/life-recovery-group-3/.
 - Neighborhood Net Ham Radio, every Sat., 10 am Amateur ham radio operators practice for emergen-

- cies on weekly repeater nets so neighbors can help neighbors. Sign up at www.mereowx.org/neighborhood-net or contactus@mereowx.org.
- Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO) meeting, Sat., Nov. 11, 10 am-12 pm., Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. HOA legal topics. Members of local HOAs are welcome. Usually meets bi-monthly (Jan., Mar., May, July, Sep., Nov.) on the second Sat. of the month. www.nepco.org.
 - Palmer Divide Quiltmakers, first Thu., 6:30-8:30 pm at Monument Chamber of Commerce building, 166 2nd St, Monument, CO.
 - Palmer Lake Art Group, second Sat. A variety of art programs are offered after the social gathering and business meetings. Guests welcome. 300 Hwy 105, NE corner of I-25 and 105. 9:30 am. Info: 719-460-4179, www.palmerlakeartgroup.com.
 - Palmer Lake Historical Society, Thu., Nov. 16, 7 pm; (doors open at 6:30 pm), Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent St. Usually meets third Thu. Contact: Kokesdm@yahoo.com, <https://palmerdividehistory.org>.
 - Pikes Peak Genealogical Society meeting, Wed., Nov. 8, 7 pm, guest speaker Lisa Alzo. Meets monthly, second Wed. Members can log in and get the monthly meeting Zoom link. Guests are welcome to attend, please request an invitation from the PPGS president at www.PPGS.org.
 - Ridgeview Baptist Church, every Sun., 10:30 am, temporarily meeting at 9130 Explorer Dr., Colorado Springs, 80920. Info: 719-357-6515 or www.ridgeviewcolorado.org. See ad on page 6.
 - Senior Bingo, third Wed. Silver Alliance Senior Center, Space is limited to 16. participants. RSVP & info: Sue Walker, 719-464-6873, or email sue@monumentalfitness.
 - Senior Book Club, second Fri., 11 am-noon, Silver Alliance Senior Center, all are welcome. Coffee & snacks. RSVP & info: Sue, 719-330-0241.
 - Tri-Lakes Parkinson's Disease Support Group, third Sat., 10 am-noon, Monument Community Presbyterian Church, 238 Third St., Monument. Info: Syble Krafft, 719-488-2669; Barry (group president), 719-351-9485. If you need any help, please call Syble or Barry.
 - Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church, Worship every Sun., 9 am Contemporary; 10:30 am Traditional. A live stream is available at www.tlumc.org/live. Watch live or replay: www.facebook.com/tlumc, www.youtube.com/tlumc.org. Info: 719-488-1365, www.tlumc.org. 20256 Hunting Downs Way, Monument. See ad on page 2.
 - Tri-Lakes Church of Christ Wednesday night fellowship classes, every Wed., 6-7:30 pm, 20450 Beacon Lite Road, Monument (corner of Beacon Lite & County Line Roads). Info: 719-488-9613, gregsmith@trilakeschurch.org, www.trilakeschurch.org.
 - Tri-Lakes Cruisers, first Wed., 7 pm. A nonprofit car club. Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce community room, with numerous activities and events each month. Club membership applications are now being accepted and are available on the website: <https://tl-cruisers.weebly.com>.
 - Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce Networking breakfast, first and third Thu., in person or via Zoom 166 2nd Street Monument 7:30-9 am free registration at www.TriLakeschamber.com.
 - Tri-Lakes Women's Club (TLWC) monthly meeting. Fri., Nov. 17, 11:30 a.m. Falcon Club, USAFA. Chicos Fashion Show: fun fashion show, latest styles for holiday parties, or something new for the winter season. Usually meets the third Fri. To become a member, or learn about the club, visit our website at www.tlwc.net Contact Info: Tri-Lakes Women's Club membership@tlwc.net.
 - Women's A. A. Step Study, every Mon., 6:30 pm, meeting remotely, check for details. Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 Baptist Rd. Park in the west lot. Info: 866-641-9190. Al-Anon Zoom Meeting, Just for Today Online, every Mon., 9:00 - 10:00 am Zoom Meeting ID: 889 4142 7446, Password 349309
 - Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7829, third Wed., 7 pm, Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce community room, 166 2nd St., Monument. New members welcome. Info: Post Commander and POC Bruce Beyerly, Bruce.Beyerly@gmail.com.
 - VFW Auxiliary to Post 7829, third Wed., 7 pm, The Country Club at Woodmoor, 18945 Pebble Beach Way, Monument. Guests are welcome to join; contact carlsonmkc@aol.com for instructions on how to connect. If you are a relative of a veteran who served on foreign soil during war or other military action, you may be eligible. Info: Kathy Carlson, 719-488-1902, carlsonmkc@aol.com.

SPECIAL EVENTS

- VOLUNTEER TODAY! Our Community News mailing days, Thu., Nov. 2 & Nov. 30, approx. 9 am-2 pm. We are all volunteers at OCN and need YOUR help, even for an hour or two, getting the papers ready to mail. Contact AllenAlchian@ocn.me or (719) 488-3455.
- 59th Annual Fall Arts and Crafts Guild Show & Sale, free. Wed.-Sun., Nov. 1-5. Wed. 4-7 pm., Thu.-Sat. 9 am-7 pm, Sun 10 am-2 pm. Black Forest & Shoup Rd, Black Forest Community Center, 12530 Black Forest Road, Black Forest, CO. BFACG is a supporter of Black Forest area scholarships, food pantries. (non-perishable donations welcome)
- Covered Treasures Bookstore Book November Signings, Sat., Nov. 4, 1-3 pm, Susan Miura signs Signs in the Dark, Shard of Light, Healer, Surviving Carmelita and Falling in Love; Fleur Bradley signs Daybreak at Raven Island and Midnight at the Barclay Hotel; Sat., Nov. 11, 1-3 pm, Walt Larimore signs At First Light: A True World War II Story of a Hero, His Bravery and an Amazing Horse; Sat., Nov. 18, 1-3 pm, Kimberlee Gard signs Mighty Silent E, The Day Punctuation Came to Town and Little I Who Lost His D.ot and Jamie Siebrase signs Tonight, A Bedtime Story; Sat., Nov. 25, 11 am-2 pm, Lisa Hatfield signs To Melt a Snowdrift and Diane Sawatzki signs The Land of Now. 105 Second Street, Monument.
- Make It Work Clinic for PCs, FREE. Donations appreciated. We are gauging interest in helping community members with their PCs, please email us if interested. enable@monumentalimpact.org. 55 Adams St

- in Downtown Monument. Monumental Impact info/register: <https://monumentalimpact.org>.
- Tri-Lakes Women's Club Third Annual Joys of the Season Holiday Home Tour, Fri.-Sat., Nov. 17-18, 10-4 pm. Inspirations for 2023 season. Five locations in Northern El Paso County - beginning at Woodmoor Barn (1691 Woodmoor Drive, Monument, CO 80132). Tickets \$25 single,\$45 pair. For details, visit <https://www.joysoftheseasonht.org>
 - Alpaca holiday extravaganza, Sat., Nov. 18, 9-5pm Sun., Nov. 19, 10 am-4 pm. Black Forest Community Club 12350 Black Forest Rd. See add on page 7.
 - Community Technology & Engineering Networking Meeting, Sat., Nov. 18, 9 am-10 am. Join community members to network and connect. Hosted by Monumental Impact. Breakfast and refreshments available. 55 Adams St., Monument. Contact: enable@monumentalimpact.org.
 - The MITEE Gobble Squabble: A Technology & Engineering Exhibition presented by D38's Bearbotics, Sat., Nov. 18, 10 am-5 pm. FREE entertainment of student-built robots, scrimmage matches, ant-weight combat bots (adults can compete too!), project shares and more. Grace Best in Monument. More information: <https://monumentalimpact.org/events/mitee-gobblesquabble/>. See ad on page 5.
 - International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day. Annual community and worldwide event Sat., Nov. 18. Speaker, kids panel, adults panel and discussion, refreshments, more. Woodman Valley Chapel. Details: www.woodmenvalley.org or contact Saucedo 719-488-8280.
 - YMCA 5K race series: Turkey trot, Thu., Nov. 23; Jingle jog, Sat., Dec. 9. See ad on page 6.
 - A Time to Dance: Believe, dance performance, Mon., Dec. 18, 6 pm. See ad on page 4.
 - Affordable Flooring Connection: Sales and installation. See ad on page 2.
 - Book signing, To Melt a Snowdrift, by Lisa Hatfield, Sat., Nov. 25, 11 am-2 pm. Covered Treasures bookstore. See ad on page 5.
 - Borders Decks - Specializing in wooden and steel deck construction. Winter specials. See ad on page 11.
 - A Christmas Shop at the Monastery, Sun., Nov. 5 -Fri., Dec. 1, Homemade goodies and handcrafted items. Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery, 3190 Benet Ln, 80921. See ad on page 3.
 - Cornerstone Cleaners, special offers through Nov. 30. 1030 W. Baptist Road, near King Soopers. See ad on page 4.
 - Downtown Monument shop local special events: Holiday Open House: Fri.-Sat., Nov. 3-4, 11 am-4 pm; Black Friday: Nov. 24, 10 am-5 pm; Small Business Saturday: Nov. 25, 10 am-5 pm; North Town Christmas: Sat. Dec. 2, 10 am-4 pm; North Pole Craft Show: Sat., Dec. 2, 9 am-4 pm; Tree Lighting: Sat., Dec. 2, 5 pm; Sunday with Santa: Dec. 10, 11 am-4 pm. See ad on page 2.
 - Eagle Wine & Spirits, special offers through Nov. 30. Baptist Road next to King Soopers. See ad on page 3.
 - Eric Elison, Lightfoot of the Rockies, Gordon Lightfoot Tribute. Fri., Nov. 17, 7-9 pm, Stargazers theater, Colorado Springs. See ad on page 4.
 - Freedom School of Martial Arts. Special confidence courses and more. See ad on page 4 and 15.
 - Gleneagle Candle Co., Special offers through Nov. 30. 13796 Gleneagle Drive 80921. See ad on page 4.
 - Monument Cleaners, special offers through Nov. 30. 15932 Jackson Creek Pkwy., in Monument Marketplace. See ad on page 5.
 - Monumental Med Spa, One day only special Black Friday event and other special offers through Nov. 30. 88 Hwy 105. See ads on page 7 and 11.
 - Noel Relief Centers, New patient specials. 950 Baptist Rd #130, Monument. See ad on page 7.
 - Peak View Windows: Stucco siding, doors and more. Special offers through Nov. 30. See ad on page 24.
 - The Living Room Plants, special offers through Nov. 30. 12229 Voyager Pkwy, Suite 100. See ad on page 5.
 - Tri-Lakes Collision and Auto Service Center, special offers through Nov. 30. 2101 Wolf Court, Monument. www.trilakescollision.com. See ad on page 5.
 - The Vanity Box, special offers, facial revivals, and more. See ad on page 3.
 - Eagle Wine and Spirits Paws N Hooves Fundraiser, Fri., Dec. 1, 6-8 pm, Wine Tasting, BBQ, Dessert Pairing, and Silent Auction. Black Forest Community Club, 12530 Black Forest Road. Tickets: on-line \$35, at the door \$50. www.eaglewineandspirit.com. See ad on page 2.
 - Kiwanis 17th Annual North Pole at Tri Lakes arts and crafts fair. Sat., Dec. 2, 9 am-4 pm. See ad on page 9.
 - S'more Holiday Fun at Fox Run Park, FREE! Sat., Dec. 9, 1-3 pm. Join the fun: hot cocoa, Fireside s'mores,

Content

Articles in Our Community News focus on the deliberations of Tri-Lakes area governmental bodies such as the Monument Board of Trustees, Palmer Lake Town Council, and many of the local water, sanitation, fire, and school district boards.

Unlike papers that try to figure out what the “story” is and then get quotes on each side to presumably lead the reader to conclude what the “truth” is, OCN’s role is to report in detail on public meetings of local governmental entities. We report what was talked about and what was decided. By reading OCN, you can find out what you might have learned if you had attended those public meetings. In this context, “truth” is that the articles accurately represent what transpired at the meetings.

The content of ads, inserts, and letters to the editor in OCN is solely the responsibility of the advertisers and authors who place those ads, inserts, and letters. The appearance of an ad, insert, or letter in OCN does not imply endorsement of the ad, insert, or letter’s content or purpose. While OCN does not knowingly run false ads, inserts, or letters, we do not research the accuracy of that content. Readers are encouraged to do their own research prior to committing to use the products or services offered or accept the conclusions of letters to the editor. Readers with concerns about the content of an ad, insert, or letter should take up those concerns with the advertiser or author.

Contact John Heiser, Publisher, at johnheiser@ocn.me or (719) 488-3455 with any questions.

- ornament crafts. Bring your pooch for the costume pooch parade. At the warming hut and gazebo beside the ponds at Fox Run Regional Park. Details: FriendsOfFoxRunPark@gmail.com. See ad on page 5.
- St. Peter Catholic Church Christmas concert for the community: Oh Come, Emmanuel. Friday, Dec. 15, 7 pm. 55 north Jefferson Street Monument. See ad on page 2.
- Our community calendar carries listings on a space-available basis for Tri-Lakes events that are sponsored by local governmental entities and not-for-profit organizations. We include events that are open to the general public and are not religious or self-promotional in nature. If space is available, complimentary calendar listings are included, when requested, for events advertised in the current issue. To have your event listed at no charge in Our Community Calendar, please send the information to calendar@ocn.me or Our Community News, P.O. Box 1742, Monument, Colorado 80132.

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Letters to Our Community

Our Community News welcomes letters to the editor on topics of general interest to readers in the Tri-Lakes area. We do not knowingly print letters that are substantially the same as letters that have been submitted to other publications. To ensure that OCN contains a variety of viewpoints, each letter writer is limited to a maximum of one (1) letter per issue and six (6) letters within a twelve (12) month period. To submit a letter, please:

- Email your letter, preferably as an attached Microsoft Word document, to editor@ocn.me or mail a copy to Our Community News, P.O. Box 1742, Monument, CO 80132-1742.
- Identify your submission as a letter to the editor and confirm that it has not been submitted to any other publication.
- Include a suggested headline or title that summarizes the topic you are addressing.
- Limit your letter to no more than 300 words including your suggested headline and closing.
- Include your full name, home address, phone numbers, and email address, if you have one. Only your name will be published.
- Submit your letter so we receive it no later than midnight, Friday, two weeks prior to the publication date.

If you have not received an acknowledgement two days after your email submission or one week after you mailed your letter, please contact John Heiser, Publisher, at (719) 488-3455 or editor@ocn.me. At OCN’s sole discretion, we may ask you for clarification of your statements. Include references, such as website links, in your letter for any facts and figures you cite. OCN does not guarantee every letter will appear in print or on-line and does not guarantee a publication date. The number of letters printed on a particular topic or in a particular issue may be limited. Letters containing personal attacks or endorsements for or complaints about individually-named commercial products or services will not be published.

Look for our next issue

Saturday, Dec. 2

Ad space reservations due: Fri., Nov. 10
Finished ad artwork due: Fri., Nov. 17
Letters to the editor due: Fri., Nov. 17
Calendar items due: Fri., Nov. 24

Visit our website to read, download, and search all the back issues at
WWW.OCN.ME



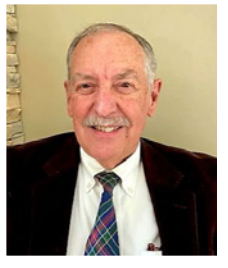
Volunteers reporting on community issues in Monument, Palmer Lake, and the surrounding Tri-Lakes area

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