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Issue #267 — Volume 23 Number 6 — Saturday, June 3, 2023

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See page 29**

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 29-31 for event locations and other details of these and many other local events.

- **OCN mailing day**, Thu., **June 1 & June 29**, approx. 9 am-2 pm.
- **YMCA summer day camp**, starts Tue., **May 30**. See ad on page 6.
- **Concerts in the park**, every Wed., through **Aug. 9**, 6:30 to 8:30 pm.
- **Color splash art show 2023**, Thu., **June 1** through Wed. **June 28**, Opening reception Fri., **June 2**, 6:30 pm.
- Love shop, Restyle your furs event, Tue.-Wed., June 6 & 7, 10 am-5 pm. See ad on page 8.
- **MVEA Annual meeting of members**, Thu., **June 8**.
- **Art Hop**, Thu., **June 15**, 5-8 pm. See ad on page 2.
- **Jackson Creek Community garage sale**, Fri.-Sat., **June 16-17**.
- **Front Range Maker's Market**, Sat., **June 17**, 8:30 am-3 pm. See ad on page 2.
- Palmer Lake Historical Society Annual Father's Day ice cream social, Sun., June 18, 2-4 pm.
- WMMI, STEaM camps, June 19-23, July 17-21, www.wmmi.org.
- Shakespeare's Pericles, Prince of Tyre. FREE performances Sat., June 24, 1:30 pm & 6 pm. Lecture 12:30 pm. Palmer Lake.
- MA Town Hall Meeting on Gender Issues, Tue., June 27, 6 pm. East campus
- Monument Hill Kiwanis 4th of July parade, See list of events on page 9.

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Circulation

Print Run: 23,120

Mail Delivery: 22,403

Stacks: 717

Tri-Lakes honors Memorial Day



Above: It was warm and sunny on May 29 when about 200 people attended a Memorial Day ceremony in Monument Cemetery. The red, white, and blue American flag and the black POW/MIA flag were raised, then lowered to half-staff as an honor guard made up of members of St. Peter Church Knights of Columbus Assembly #2594, Knights of Columbus Assembly #11514, American Legion Post 9-11, and VFW Post 7829 saluted and some raised their swords while the crowd sang the national anthem. The ceremony included speeches by local and state politicians and the traditional reading of the names of veterans interred in the cemetery while a bell was rung for each name. The program ended with taps played by Michael Carlson, a graduate of Palmer Ridge High School. *Photo by Michael Weinfeld.*

Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education, May 22

Pay schedule approved, board roles revised, funding detailed

By Harriet Halbig

The Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education discussed several major topics at its May 22 meeting. These included the final total of funding from the School Finance Act, a reversal of the Board of Vice President and Appointment of Secretary, approval of the 2023-24 pay schedule, and other subjects.

School funding for 2023-24

Chief Business Officer Brett Ridgway reported that the School Finance Act funding for the 2023-24 school year increased by 10.2%. Because the previous estimated increase was 9%, this

amount resulted in significant changes in the proposed budget for the coming school year.

The per pupil revenue as a result of this increase will be \$10,000 and the increase will also be reflected in the pay schedule, as seen below.

Ridgway reported that, in addition to this increase, schools and departments were able to discover efficiencies in their operations which would yield an additional \$850,000 to be used for compensation of staff.

Treasurer Ron Schwarz asked

D38 BOE (Cont. on 8)

Principal Parsley retires



Above: Bear Creek Elementary School students didn't want retiring Principal Peggy Parsley to leave without showing how much she meant to them. On May 8, student officers of the Kiwanis K-Kids Club gave Parsley a binder of letters written by club members. The students wrote the letters and then copied them onto special paper that was laminated and loaded into a three-ring binder with a cover designed by one of the students. The K-Kids Club is made up of fourth- through sixth-graders. They do projects aimed at strengthening leadership skills and their appreciation for the impact of service to others. Parsley is the only principal the school has ever had. *Photo by RF Smith.*

MA School Board, May 11, 25

MA addresses gender issues, budgets

By Jackie Burhans

At its May 11 regular meeting, the Monument Academy board heard from its community about a gender restroom issue and heard committee highlights. At a special meeting on May 25, the board approved budgets, including changes to job descriptions and organizational structures.

MA addresses gender issues again

During citizen comments, mother and daughter Jenn and Avery Brady spoke out on an interaction between the daughter and a transgender girl who used a restroom. Jenn Brady said her daughter had started a petition to secure privacy and safety in the restroom. She said she was proud of MA's previous proclamation on gender issues but that it must close the loop to protect all students. The current solution for a student who feels unsafe is to use a unisex restroom or one by the nurse, which she felt discriminated against the majority, causing students to lose passing time—the time between classes when students must pass from one room to another. The solution, while costly, she said, was for MA to overhaul its restrooms. She felt confident parents would rally and said the ball was in MA's court.

MA (Cont. on 2)

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MA (Cont. from 1)

Avery reminded the board that its proclamation supported natural law and moral truth and said it would protect the innocence, well-being, privacy, and safety of every one of MA's stu-



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dents. Recently, she said, a “biological male” [sic] has been seen entering the girls’ restroom. She said she understood that MA had to follow state law and allow “biological males” identifying as females access to the girls’ restroom. However, the board proclamation mentions the overall privacy of every student. She said MA was protecting “his” privacy but what about hers and that of all the other girls? She said that MA proclaimed it would protect every student, which means her as well.

MA’s proclamation against gender identity protection can be found on its website at bit.ly/ma-proclamation. Read more information about that proclamation at www.ocn.me/v22n3.htm#ma.

Later in the agenda, the board discussed a proposed Town Hall meeting with legal counsel on navigating gender issues at MA. President Ryan Graham said that there had been an incident at MA’s East Campus that caused a significant number of parents to reach out to the board regarding gender issues and the use of restrooms. He encouraged parents to familiarize themselves with two bills mentioned in



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MA's proclamation: SB08-200, which expands discrimination protection to a person's sexual orientation, and HB21-1108, which clarifies that protected class includes "gender identity" and "gender expression." He noted that MA and every charter school must comply or be subject to legal action. The proclamation is an official announcement but does not constitute a violation of the law.

The intent of the Town Hall is to ask questions and hear directly from legal counsel what they can do as parents and what MA can do as a school while still being in accordance with the law. The meeting will be open to the community, and at least three board members will be in attendance. The Town Hall will be held on June 27 at 6 p.m. at


MA's East Campus.

Budgets approved

At the May 11 regular meeting, interim COO Kim McClelland

reported on the FY23-24 budget in the absence of interim Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Gary Gustafson. This met the state requirement that the

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budget be presented to the board before May 31.

At a special meeting on May 25, Gustafson returned to request approval of a supplemental budget for FY22-23, explaining that, while school districts and charters can amend budgets throughout the year, after Jan. 1 the only mechanism to do so was via a

supplemental budget for which an entity must have additional revenues or resources. MA needed to do so to clean up different accounts and accommodate expenditures for the year, he said, noting that it was a violation of state statutes for expenditures to exceed appropriations and that approving the supplemental budget would bring MA back into alignment.

He reminded the board that in the previous year, the auditor had commented that MA had exceeded its total appropriations and it was important not to do so a second time. The revised appropriation showed a total increase of \$2.3 million, primarily to the founda-

tion fund, which accommodates the debt service for the East Campus building. He noted that MA's original forecast was for 1,150 students, but they had only certified 1107.5 students, which resulted in \$300,000 less in program funding. The board unanimously approved the FY22-23 supplemental budget.

Gustafson then discussed the proposed FY23-24 budget, starting by thanking the staff and interim COO for their work. He said he welcomed the board adopting the budget documents but that it had until June 30 to approve it. He started with budget assumptions which included increasing enrollment by just over 100 students to a total enrollment of 1219.5, noting that this is a plan and that numbers can be amended later. He noted the budget plans for 676.5 students in elementary and breaks out middle school at 402 from high school at an enrollment of 141. The 2023 school finance act set the per-pupil funding at \$10,034, and he expects the per-pupil mill levy override (MLO) funding to be slightly decreased, although due to increased enrollment, the total will be higher. The budget assumptions also include revenues from

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instructional material fees for the first time and will include MA's expenses such as contributions to insurance, the Public Employee Retirement Account (PERA), and Medicare.

The board packet included the appropriation resolution, which sets the maximum MA can spend by fund, including \$17.4 million in the general fund, \$500,000 in the preschool fund, and set amounts in the facilities, foundation, and pupil activity fund. By approving the resolution, the board would be approving the budget. Another required document is the fund balance resolution that would disclose any fund draw-down activity but is set to zero at this time. The inter-fund borrowing resolution is required by the state and applies to MA, which pools its cash into a single account. The statute requires MA to pay back any inter-fund borrowing within 60 days and to balance the accounts by June 30 each year. The preschool fund is kept separately, and MA has no anticipation of a preschool grant this year. The budgeted revenue is based on preschool fees but is very uncertain given the rollout of Colorado's Universal Preschool program (UPK), in which MA is not participating.

Gustafson also noted that the Facilities Corporation fund and the Foundation fund are used to transfer money to pay principal, interest, and trustee management fees for the West Campus and East Campus buildings, respectively. This is a significant part of the budget, he said, informing the board that preliminary conversations have begun on how to refund the 2019 bonds for the East Campus. He said MA needed to continue to hope that interest rates would come down. Gustafson said that accurate accounting by school was a requirement of MA's bond covenants.

The middle school is basically subsidizing the high school, he said, which is common until enrollment gets larger and the high school can cover more

of the central overhead facility costs. He said he would create a unique accounting system where anything that could be directly charged to the middle or high school would be, but the central common area costs would be allocated on a per-pupil basis. This would transfer \$2.3 million of common area costs to the middle school.

Finally, Gustafson noted that he was thrilled to have a balanced budget that cleaned up deficits, included all staff, and was not dependent on fundraising for operational needs. The budget, he said, is resourcing for the board's strategic plan. It's a tight budget without much flexibility, he said, and MA will need to continue with budget discipline next year.

He explained that MA would pool all its financial resources into its Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software so that schools, department heads, and prin-

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cipals could look at their budgets at any time in addition to receiving monthly reports. New processes would be implemented to require a budget transfer request if there was a budget overrun, and a full-time equivalent (FTE) authorization form would need approval before an additional employee could be hired. McClelland noted that following these proce-

dures would be one of the principals' goals. Board member Craig Carle suggested that since the budget did not include fundraising, perhaps any fundraising could furnish contingency funds. Gustafson said that since MA did get donations, the budget does have \$100,000 total in fundraising for both campuses. He said any money from a fundraising effort such as the gala could be used for specific targeted purposes like an athletic field.

The board voted unanimously to approve the FY23-24 budget.

Updated job descriptions and org chart
As part of the budget discussion, McClelland reviewed changes to the organization chart and updates to job

descriptions. The organization chart reflects what is in the budget, she said, and approving the budget would approve the positions but not necessarily the structure. McClelland said she added the students to the top of the organization chart as they are the most important part. To foster the goal of "one MA" she has added the PTO to the chart to show how they support the overall organization. The organization chart is split into Operations and Finance, Academic, and Student Support. Some positions overlap the areas, and each section has categories showing the reporting structure.

She discussed changing the position name from COO to executive director, saying she felt strongly that it reflected that the position covered academics as well as operations. The chart was color coded with

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
LEWIS-PALMER SCHOOL DISTRICT 38
2023-2024 FISCAL YEAR
SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET

Notice is hereby given that a proposed budget has been submitted to the Board of Education of Lewis-Palmer Consolidated School District No. 38 for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024. The proposed budget document is available for public inspection at the District Administration Office or online at www.lewispalmer.org/financialtransparency.

A public hearing on the proposed budget will be held during a virtual meeting of the Board of Education of said District on June 26, 2023, at 6:00 pm. Any person interested in participating in the public hearing to share a comment related to the proposed budget may contact Vicki Wood, Secretary to the Board of Education, at vwood@lewispalmer.org by noon on Friday, June 22, 2023, for additional information. Such proposed budget will be considered for adoption during the same virtual meeting.

Any person paying school taxes in said District may at any time prior to the final adoption of the budget file or register his/her objections thereto.

Dated: May 24, 2023
/s/ Kris Norris, Secretary
Board of Education
Lewis-Palmer Consolidated Schools
El Paso County School District No. 38
Monument, Colorado 80132

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Above: Monument Academy (MA) board Vice President Lindsay Clinton presents a certificate of appreciation to Amanda Peters, a parent, for her event planning and other support for MA's gala fundraiser event: Boot, Scoot & Bid held on April 20 at the Spruce Mountain Ranch. The event raised \$129,000 to support teacher compensation, safety, and security. Photo by Jackie Burhans.

dark blue representing the executive director and support systems such as finance, marketing, facilities, athletics, and operations manager, which is the new title for Jake Dicus, whose title of manager of Development and Mission Engagement was incorrect. The position is responsible for day-to-day operations under the executive director and has no one reporting to it. Human Resources is a change in nomenclature from People Operations, and there is an added position of school culture and assessment coordinator that will be posted. This role will cover all grade levels and help support the principals in behavioral matters through discipline, proactive programs, and family engagement, as well as working with contractor Jennifer Strawbridge in data collection and reporting via dashboards.

Gustafson said they had discussed the feasibility of hiring a finance director but that, given the progress made in the past five months, he was reluctant to turn the work back over. In fact, he said the turnover in finance over the past four to five years had hindered the financial integrity of the school.

Knowing the budget is tight, he will continue to fill in on a part-time basis as a contract employee, with existing staff picking up the day-to-day activities. He plans to grow the capabilities of the finance staff and turn over things like payroll and bank reconciliation so he can focus on big projects like debt financing for the parking lot, refinancing the 2019 bonds, and preparing for the audit. Gustafson said he could build a more sustainable structure for the long term if he stays another year. He confirmed that, for the next six months, he would still be attending Finance Committee and board meetings while working to bring purchasing and payroll back in-house. MA is paying Netchex \$3,600 per month to do payroll, and he hopes to save that money and be in great shape by January 2024.

Board member Emily Belisle asked about the name change to teacher assistant from para; McClelland explained that the term para usually was used for special education. She also clarified that the two women who had shared the registrar position would be full-time employees, each responsible for a separate campus. The position of athletics manager is another nomenclature change as director positions usually have a master's degree or at least a principal's license. She said she was working with Michael Svendsen on an alternative administrative degree. She also confirmed that MA's Director of Academics, Tina Leone, is still part-time and would be assisted by the person they hire in the new instructional coach role.

Finally, Belisle asked to understand the Special Education (SPED) department and why the positions of school psychologist, social worker, and counselor were necessary. McClelland said that she had reviewed MA's charter contract with the district and was surprised to see it was on a fully insured model where every employee would be approved or provided by the school district. This is not how things work now, she said, and she would be seeking an amendment to the charter contract to better define roles and revenue related to SPED. Once she has that, she will be better able to walk through it with the board, but in the meantime,

these roles are placeholders in the organization chart.

Board member Joe Bukowski asked about budgeting for school resource officers (SROs) and the collectability of instructional fees. McClelland explained that a second SRO was in the budget under safety and security as a contracted position from the Monument Police Department, along with additional sensors to detect propped

doors. She said that principals recently went through the list of outstanding fees and contacted parents, some of whom had not reviewed their Infinite Campus accounts. There will be a more proactive process going forward, she said, noting that MA could limit privileges such as checking out a library book or walking at graduation for students with outstanding fees.



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Highlights

Board meeting highlights include:

- Board Vice President Lindsay Clinton spotlighted Amanda Peters, a parent, for bringing her event-planning skills to MA's Boot, Scoot, and Bid fundraiser. Dicus reported that the event was a great success, raising over \$129,000, which would impact salaries, contributions toward benefits, and a second school resource officer.
- The board unanimously approved changes to MA's bylaws specifying that the board may not include MA employees or their immediate family and declaring that a director shall be deemed to have resigned in the event they have two unexcused absences.
- The board set its summer retreat date for 9 a.m. July 13 ahead of its regular meeting.
- Clinton said that Board Café chats would resume in August.
- Graham said the first pre-construction meeting for the recirculation road around the West Campus was held on the morning of May 11 at the Wilson & Co offices. They will be mobilizing equipment on May 22 and breaking ground shortly.
- Graham thanked the MA West Campus Parent-Teacher Organization for reaching out about a shade structure. He spoke with contractors at a pre-construction meeting about doing this work at the same time.
- Board member Michael Geers reported on the School Accountability and Advisory Committee (SAAC) West end-of-year survey, which recommended the school put out a video on how to use the carline and hopes to see PTO events better promoted.
- Board member Emily Belisle reported that the SAAC East end-of-year survey had 39 responses, whose greatest concern was mid-year teacher turnover. The committee recommends that the board remain dedicated to staff pay and retention, aligning curriculum, expanding extracurricular activities, and developing school spirit and meaningful traditions.
- After the adjournment of the May 11 board meeting, Calvin Yuen, a student, spoke against the board's

cancellation of an eSport event, saying the club was trying to make money for something students are passionate about.

- After the executive session following the special meeting on May 25, the board reported that member Danny O'Brien has resigned from the board.

The MA School Board meets at 6 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. The next regular board meeting will be on Thursday, June 8, at 6 p.m. at the East Campus. See more information at <https://bit.ly/ma-boe>.

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

D38 BOE (Cont. from 1)

whether this increase in state funding was sustainable.

Ridgway responded that this amount is sustainable but that another increase of this magnitude is unlikely.

Schwarz commented that this indicates that the state is confident in its ability to fund at this level.

In his proposed budget presentation later in the meeting, Ridgway also mentioned interest income as a revenue source. Interest income for this year totals \$200,000, which will be applied to compensation.

Ridgway also said that the district has set aside \$3 million for capital improvements in the coming year, returning to pre-pandemic levels.

When asked how property taxes are reflected in the revenue, Ridgway responded that property taxes never leave the county. The state is aware of the amount collected and backfills the remaining amount to reach the appropriate funding.

He pointed out that D38 enjoyed a large increase in property values over the past few years and consequently provided a larger percentage of the funding than some smaller counties.

The proposed budget presented later in the meeting is required by state statute to be provided by May 31. The board will vote to approve the final budget at its June 26 meeting.

Pay schedule approved

Ridgway explained the pay schedule, which reflects the increase in state revenue.

Ridgway explained some new programs which will be made available to employees in the coming year. These include Health Savings Plans, lower bonuses for hard-to-fill positions, and bonuses for longevity. In addition, employees will be credited for additional years of experience, for 15 years up from the current nine, and this credit will be reflected in compensation. Over the next few years, this credit will increase to 20 years.

Ridgway credited the Staff Collaboration Committee for its help in determining which programs are desired by district employees.

He reported that nearby districts anticipate increasing compensation by 8% to 9% while D38 will be able to provide an average 12% when including the \$850,000 in efficiencies. While this does not entirely close the gap, it is a considerable improvement.

For details on the pay schedule, please see boarddocs on the district website, lewispalmer.org, under the May 22 date of this meeting.

The board approved the pay schedule as presented.

Board reorganization revised

At its April 17 meeting, following the appointment of Kris Norris as the new director of District 1, the board conducted a reorganization in pursuit of district policy.

At the April meeting, the board elected Tiffney Upchurch president by secret ballot, and the board voted on a new vice president, which was not a vacant position.

Because this position was already filled by Theresa Phillips, the vote for new board vice president was considered null and void.

The board thereby proposed that Phillips be reinstated as vice president. At the May 22 meeting, the board appointed Norris as board secretary.

This proposal was passed.

The board further stated that though the full reorganization was not necessary during the April meeting, it is important to note that all members have been duly elected and appointed and their actions are still valid.

Parent and Community Advisory Committee

Outgoing Chair Kelly Bain reported on activities of the Parent and Community Advisory Committee.

The committee is composed of teachers and parents from all schools in the district, including Monument Academy, liaisons from the Board of

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Above and left: At the May 22 meeting of the D38 Board of Education, the board recognized the Bearbotics district robotics team. Head coaches Jeanette Breton and Mike Hinkle (see

inset) displayed their robots for the First Robotics Club (FRC), First Technical Challenge (FTC), and First Lego League (FLL) teams. Dan Vandehoek, FRC representative and co-captain, and other team members spoke about the program's origins and the team's efforts and achievements over the past school year. All three teams placed in regionals and went to state competitions. Bearbotics is an experiential learning program for science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM)-focused students. Teams build large, custom, high-power, complex robots—using the latest design and fabrication tools—for competition. Students practice skills like leadership, communication, project and business management, teamwork, and applied creativity in a supportive environment with extensive access to local professionals for mentorship. Learn more about Bearbotics and its summer programs and support the team at www.bearbotics.org. Photos by Jackie Burhans.

Education and the administration, two student representatives from the high schools, and a community representative.

Bain said the committee offers the opportunity to receive information from the district administration and pass it along to the school level. The committee also advises the district on matters of budget, teacher evaluations, and assessments.

The committee meets at several different schools each year, giving members the opportunity to see how schools approach their responsibilities.

The committee also includes reports from the Special Education Advisory Committee, the Gifted Education Leadership Team and the Wellness Committee.

The committee changed its name this year from the District Accountability Advisory Committee in an effort to increase public attendance.

Superintendent update
During his monthly update, Superintendent KC Somers celebrated the achievements of many individuals in sports, academics, and other pursuits.

Some school-level achievements are notable:

- The John Irwin Award rewarding academic achievement was awarded to Bear Creek Elementary, Lewis-Palmer Elementary, and Prairie Winds Elementary.
- Prairie Winds and Lewis-Palmer Elementary also received the Governor's Distinguished Improvement Award. D38 was also Accredited with Distinction.
- Brian Hoff of Lewis-Palmer High School received a National Diamond Coach Award for excellence and longevity in speech and debate. This is Hoff's third award.

For a complete list of district achievements, please see boarddocs.

Transportation discussion

While not on the board's agenda, there were several public comments regarding a proposed change in transportation availability to students living east of Highway 83.

This subject was discussed at the board's May 2 work session. The proposal is to reduce

the number of routes in that area from four to one and to provide additional service to the area around Palmer Lake Elementary.

Transportation Supervisor Julie Abeyta said that these buses have often returned empty.

The individuals who commented said that their children would need to travel 3 to 8 miles to a centralized stop in order to use the bus service.

The proposed service would also require that a parent or guardian be present at the stop when a student is brought home.

A meeting was scheduled for May 23 to further discuss this issue.

Correction

At the request of board Treasurer Ron Schwarz, following is a description of the procedure used to reorganize the board at its April 17 meeting:

- Tiffiney Upchurch and Ron Schwarz were nominated for the position of board president.
- Upchurch was elected via secret ballot.
- Matthew Clawson nominated Schwarz for the role of vice president
- Schwarz declined the nomination and stated that his skill set was better suited to continue in another capacity.
- Clawson immediately nominated Kris Norris for the role of vice president
- Following Norris' appointment, Upchurch asked Theresa Phillips and Schwarz if they would consider serving as secretary and treasurer, respectively. Both parties agreed.

The Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education usually meets at 6 p.m. on the third Monday of

the month in its learning center, 146 N. Jefferson St., Monument. The next meeting, which will be on Zoom, will be on

June 26.
Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me.

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El Paso Board of County Commissioners, May 2, 9, and 16

Approval of three commercial multi-tenant buildings off Struthers Road

By Helen Walklett

At the May 16 El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) land use meeting, the commissioners voted to approve a preliminary plan for the Cathedral Rock Commons Commercial development, which will create three commercial lots on property directly south of the Big R store off Struthers Road in Monument.

Cathedral Rock Commons Commercial

At the May 16 meeting, the commissioners approved a preliminary plan request by Store Master Funding VIII LLC, the owners of the Big R Store, to create three commercial lots and a tract on the 10.25-acre property at the northeast corner of Struthers Road and Spanish Bit Drive. The land is zoned commercial community. The application came from the Planning Commission with a recommendation for approval following its April 20 meeting.

The existing Big R will be on the 6.2-acre lot 1. Lots 2 and 3 will each be

less than 2 acres and will have three commercial multi-tenant retail buildings on them, connected via a shared driveway to the Big R store to the north. The applicant anticipates the properties will include businesses that cater to the rural aesthetic that supports the existing Big R store. The first building to the east will potentially have three retail tenants as will the middle building which will also have a drive-through. The third building on the west side of the drive will house a possible wheat grass business and restaurant.

The application was heard as a consent item, meaning there was no discussion.

Loop Water Authority update

At the May 9 BOCC meeting, the commissioners received an update on the Loop Water Authority water reuse project which will build infrastructure to allow water flowing south to be reused by being stored in Calhan Reservoir and pumped back north to customers after treatment. The project received

\$4 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding from county in September 2022. See Loop Water Authority article on page 22.

Cherokee Metropolitan District (CMD), Donala Water and Sanitation District, the Town of Monument, and Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District formed the El Paso County Regional Water Loop Authority (EPCRWA) in November 2022.

Amy Lathen, CMD general manager, told the commissioners that the four organizations were working together to deliver renewable water sources to customers in the northern part of the county. She said the renewable and reuse water would take some of the pressure off the Denver Basin wells and preserve water resources in the parts of the county that are not part of Colorado Springs Utilities' water resource system. Lathen stressed that the authority was very open to other districts joining as they see the benefit of the project.

Jessie Shaffer, district manager,

Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District and president of EPCRWA, said water quality testing had begun and that the authority was working to hire a project manager to get the project to the construction phase. He hoped to have the person in place in June.

Kevin Brown, CMD water resource engineer, said a schematic design would be worked on over the next six months. This would identify the pipeline route, required pipe sizes, and where pump stations and other infrastructure should be located. This information would then allow the project to move forward with land acquisition.

Commissioner Stan VanderWerf stated he remained really supportive of the concept, commenting, "I really honestly feel we've been great and responsible stewards of our precious resources here in this region, including water, and this is just another great example of trying to continue that legacy."

Helen Walklett can be reached at helenwalklett@ocn.me.

El Paso County Planning Commission, May 4 and 18

Townhome development off Woodmoor Drive recommended for approval

By Helen Walklett

At the May 18 El Paso County Planning Commission meeting, the commissioners heard a rezone and preliminary plan request for a 7.53-acre property on the east side of Woodmoor Drive where 52 townhomes would be built. The commissioners also heard a rezone and a minor subdivision request for Black Forest properties during May.

Townhome development proposed off Woodmoor Drive

At the May 18 meeting, the commissioners voted 6-1 to recommend for approval a combined rezone and preliminary plan request by Lake Woodmoor

Holdings LLC for a 7.53-acre property on the east side of Woodmoor Drive and south of Deer Creek Road. Known as Waterside at Lake Woodmoor, it borders the lake to its east and proposes 52 single-family townhomes.

The rezone would see the property zoned PUD (planned unit development) instead of its current and now obsolete R-4 (planned development) zoning. The applicant also requests a finding of water sufficiency for water quality, quantity, and dependability and has secured a commitment letter from Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, and both the county attorney

and the state water engineer have made findings of sufficiency. Ryan Howser, planner III, Planning and Community Development Department, explained that if the water were approved at this stage, final plats could be approved administratively, meaning no further public hearings for this application.

Brooks Swenson, project manager, NES Inc. and representing the applicant, said the proposed development has a density of about 6.9 dwelling units per acre (DUA). This is less than the approximate density of 11 DUAs for the 83 Waterside Condominiums that were approved on the site in 1983 but never developed.

The applicant states in their letter of intent that the development will facilitate a density transition between the higher density residential and commercial to the south and the lower density residential to the north and east. In total, 35% of the development would be open space.

The applicant is asking for four modifications with the PUD, and Commissioner Eric Moraes raised an issue with the one requesting a cul-de-sac be replaced by a hammerhead turnaround. He said he could not see how it could be justified by the land development code criteria.

Howser said the county had notified 35 adjoining property owners. No one spoke in support at the hearing; two local residents spoke in opposition, raising concerns about water, traffic (particularly in relation to the nearby schools and pedestrian safety), and that the hammerhead was not in keeping with the surrounding area where cul-de-sacs prevail.

Swenson responded that the traffic study had taken the school traffic into account and stated, "what's being proposed is less dense than what's been approved [in the past] and so there would be a reduction in traffic." He stated that the applicant has been working with the Woodmoor Improvement Association to advance the Safe Routes to School plan and commented that the lower density would help with water use and that there was also a

housing crisis which the development would help address.

Commissioner Becky Fuller said, "I think generally speaking this fits. It makes a lot of sense."

Moraes said, "I generally think it's a good project, but I don't think they've made the justification in accordance with the land development code on the hammerhead." He added that he had other reservations such as the request to have private roads which people might use to bypass Woodmoor Drive. He thought this would eventually lead to the private roads being closed to non-residents.

The vote to recommend for approval was 6-1. Moraes was the nay vote. Commissioner Christopher Whitney said his vote was "a reluctant aye for the same reasons as Mr. Moraes."

The application is now due to be heard at the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) land use meeting on June 20.

Vessey Road rezone to RR-2.5

Also at the May 18 meeting, the commissioners heard a request to rezone a 14-acre Black Forest property from RR-5 (rural residential) to RR-2.5 (rural residential). It is west of the intersection of Vessey Road and Black Forest Road and south of the intersection of Vessey Road and Pine Castle Drive.

The applicant has also submitted a minor subdivision application and wishes to divide the property into a three-lot subdivision with each lot being 4 acres or greater. This application is currently under review.

The rezone application was originally scheduled as a consent item but was elevated to a full hearing, albeit a short one, after concerns were raised that the rezone would allow the applicant or a subsequent owner to ask for five lots in the future. Commissioner Becky Fuller asked, "Is there protection for the neighbors if we approve this?" Commissioner Jay Carlson questioned whether they [the commissioners] could add a condition that the applicant abide by the lot sizes set out in the subdivision application. Senior



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Assistant County Attorney Lori Seago confirmed this could be done.

Brett Louk, with SMH Consultants and representing the owner, confirmed that his client was happy that a 4-acre lot size condition be added to the rezone approval.

One neighbor spoke in opposition, voicing concern about water and a fear the rezone would enable the property to be further subdivided.

Kylie Bagley, planner II, Planning and Community Development, said that water availability would be looked at as part of the subdivision application. The lot minimum size was addressed by the added condition.

The vote to recommend the application for approval was unanimous. It is now due to be heard at the BOCC land use meeting on June 20.

Kinch minor subdivision

At the May 4 meeting, the commissioners heard a request by Paul and Amy Kinch to subdivide their 29.12-acre property on Milam Road into three 5-acre lots and one 14-acre lot. The subdivision does not require a rezone as the land is already zoned RR-5.

The applicants plan to build a new home on the larger lot and sell the other three at a future date. They state in their

letter of intent that the subdivision will allow them to better maximize the use of their land.

The application was heard as a consent item, meaning there was no further discussion and will now be heard at the BOCC land use meeting on June 6.

New chair and vice chair

At the May 18 meeting, the commissioners voted to elect

Commissioner Thomas Bailey as chair and Commissioner Jay Carlson as vice chair. Bailey served as vice chair under former Commissioner Brian Risley's chairmanship. Risley stepped down in April following his election to the Colorado Springs City Council.

Helen Walklett can be reached at helenwalklett@ocn.me.

Monument Town Council, May 1 and 15

Midtown Collection of Monument Junction approved on 5-2 vote

By Chris Jeub
A newly appointed Monument chief of police was sworn in on May 15. The Midtown Collection at Monument Junction West Filing No. 1, a controversial Planned Unit Development (PUD) project, was approved on a split vote. A technical glitch led to the failure of the May 15 Town Council meeting to be published online, leaving only the agenda items to be reported on in this issue of OCN.

New chief of police

Patrick Regan was sworn in as the new chief of police for Monument on May 15, ending a five-month vacancy in the position. Regan brings 23 years of law enforcement experience from the Scottsdale Police Department in Arizona, where he served in various roles including undercover narcotics detective, SWAT operator, and internal affairs supervisor. He is a graduate of the FBI National Academy and has extensive executive leadership training. Regan expressed his excitement about joining the Monument community and highlighted his commitment to maintaining a strong relationship with the residents. He plans to increase the number of officers on patrol, enhance community engagement efforts, and focus on collaboration, accountability, and communication within the Police Department.

Monument Junction

Ordinance No. 10-2023, which approved a Preliminary/Final Planned Unit Development (PUD) for Midtown Collection at Monument Junction West Filing No. 1, was approved on a 5-2 vote. The project encompasses 21.7 acres with a primary use of single-family detached homes. The development is classified as a mixed-use PUD, surrounded by other PUD-zoned land.

The Monument Planning Commission recommended denial of the plan on April 12 in a 4-3 vote, stating that it did not meet the criteria set forth in the town's land development code and was inconsistent with the comprehensive plan. However, the town staff recommended approval, asserting that the plan adhered to applicable development standards and was generally consistent with the comprehensive plan.

Andrea Barlow of N.E.S., representing Classic Homes, presented on behalf of the ap-



Above: Patrick Regan had no idea when he got married in Monument in 2012 that he'd return 11 years later as police chief. Regan was sworn in at the Monument Town Council meeting on May 15. He replaces interim chief Tim Johnson who returns to his previous rank of commander. Regan has spent the past 23 years with the Scottsdale, Ariz., Police Department. He served as an undercover narcotics detective, violent crime investigator, Spanish interpreter, gang enforcement supervisor, internal affairs supervisor, patrol watch commander, commander of the special investigations division, and other positions. After being sworn in, Regan said he's "incredibly excited" about his new position. He said after he married his wife, Bree, they'd been "trying to come back ever since." Photo by Michael Weinfeld.



Above: At the May 15 Monument Town Council meeting, Police Officer Dakota Degenhart received a medal for helping to save the life of a person who tried to commit suicide on April 3. Town Manager Mike Foreman said Degenhart and Palmer Lake Officer Eugene Ramirez found the person hanging from a rope in the woods off Red Rocks Drive. By cutting the person down, Foreman said their "quick thinking and teamwork saved a life." Photo by Michael Weinfeld

plicant, challenging the denial from the commission. Barlow emphasized the benefits of the proposed public park and highlighted that the land had been zoned for commercial development since the 1980s. The sketch plan, which was approved by the council in 2020, was described as a conceptual plan rather than a precise plan. Barlow pointed out that Commissioner Danny Ours had approved the sketch plan at the time, and the history of the application indicated a

track record of approval rather than denial. Barlow explained the recent history of the property:

- The Village Sketch Plan: Approved on June 15, 2020.
- Monument Junction West Filing No. 1 Final Plat: Approved on Feb. 7, 2022.
- Monument Junction Phase 1 (East) Preliminary/Final PUD Plan: Approved on March 21, 2022, with 204 units.
- Monument Junction

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Phase 1 (East) Filing No. 1 Final Plat: Approved on July 5, 2022, with 58 units.

- Monument Junction West Filing No. 1, Lot 4 (Whataburger) Preliminary/Final PUD Plan: Approved on Oct. 17, 2022.
- Monument Junction West Filing No. 1, Lot 5 (Multi-family) Preliminary/Final PUD Plan: Approved on Oct. 17, 2022, with 240 units.
- Monument Junction Phase 1 (East) Filing No. 2 Final Plat: Approved on Nov. 21, 2022, with 146 units.

Though the development faced scrutiny from the Planning Commission, the council ultimately decided to approve it by a 5-2 vote, with Councilmembers Kenneth Kimple and Sana Abbott voting against, citing density and traffic concerns. The approval of both the PUD and the final plat marks the end

of a challenging development approval process for the Midtown Collection at Monument Junction.

May 15 meeting

Due to a technical failure, the May 15 Town Council meeting failed to publish online. The meeting consisted of the following agenda items:

1. Town Accountant Mona Hirjoi presented the 2024 budget.
2. Bob Cole disclosed potential conflicts of interest. A vote was taken to exclude council members with conflicts from consideration, discussions, and voting on relevant matters.
3. Approval of the Consent Agenda: The consent agenda items approved were the agenda for May 15, 2023, special meeting minutes from April 26, 2023, meeting minutes from May 1, 2023, Resolution

No. 34-2023 (on-call engineering service agreement with Jacobs Engineering Group Inc.), and Resolution No. 35-2023 (contract with A-1 Chipseal for the 2023 Chipseal Program).

4. Proclamation: Mike Foreman presented the Police Week Proclamation.
5. Presentation: Officer Dakota De-genhart received a medal for saving a life, presented by Foreman.
6. Chief of Police Patrick J. Regan took the oath of office, administered by Foreman.
7. Town Attorney Bob Cole initiated a discussion on land acquisition for the Monument Hill Tank Site.
8. Deputy Clerk Tina Erickson requested a presentation on June 5 from Girls of the West, Pikes Peak Range Riders, and Pikes Peak or Bust Rodeo.

Please note that this summary is based solely on the agenda items provided, and further details or discussions that occurred during the meeting are not included.

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 two regular meetings are scheduled for Monday, June 5 and Monday, June 19. 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 <http://monumenttownco.minuteson-demand.com> and click on Town Council.

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

Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, May 3, 11, and 25

Board considers water issues and Elephant Rock

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

In May, the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees (PLBOT) continued to grapple with water rates, urgently needed improvements to the town's water system, stormwater drainage, and the future of the Elephant Rock property. The board has worked on these issues in some cases for years. The water system improvements, stormwater drainage issues and funding are complex in themselves and are interconnected. Together, they were the main topics of workshops and board meetings in May. The board heard a presentation from Awake Palmer Lake. Permits were is-

sued for three special events.

Strategy for water rates proves elusive

At a workshop meeting on May 3, the board discussed a revised water rate study written by Chris Brandewie, the town's water rate consultant. Brandewie's study addressed the need to increase reserves to fund capital improvement projects. He recommended that capital projects costing \$10,000 or less be paid with operating funds, and projects above that amount be paid with reserves, grants, or loans. Brandewie initially recommended

adding \$550,429 to reserves annually for capital improvement projects.

Brandewie's study proposed three cumulative increases to the town's base water rate:

- To balance the water budget only, the monthly base rate for residential customers would need to be \$80.02, an increase of \$11.79 per month from the current base rate.
- To add savings for improvements to the water system proposed by GMS Engineering Inc. (GMS) in its Preliminary Engineering Report (PER), the monthly base rate would need to be \$92.88, a total increase of \$24.67.
- To add savings for capital improvement projects over the next 30 years, the base monthly rate would need to be \$107.92, a total increase of \$39.69.

when calculating fees.

- Consider increasing fees over a two- to three-year period.

The packet materials ask the board to confirm this approach and to add any additional direction to Brandewie.

At the May 11 board meeting, resident Roger Moseley gave the board his thoughts on water rates. Mosley discussed issues including basing rates on tap size, how to balance culinary use and yard watering, the impact of family size on water bills and whether to prioritize conservation. He argued operation and maintenance funding and capital improvement funding should be separated in financial reports. Mosely said the board should focus on operation and maintenance costs and should increase water fees by \$30 per month.

Town Administrator Dawn Collins agreed that operation and maintenance funding should be accounted for separately, adding that change was already being made.

Brandewie's water rate study is posted on the town's website here: https://www.townofpalmerlake.com/sites/default/files/fileattachments/board_of_trustees/meeting/packets/7814/scenario_0.1_and_sketches_palmer_lake_water_rate_study_wadd.pdf.

The board asked Mark Morton, the engineer who wrote the PER mentioned above, for his comments on the water rate study. Morton said he would defer to the study on the issue of balancing the budget, and he also agreed with the study's conclusions on funding for capital improvements.

Mayor Glant Havenar questioned whether the best approach was to "rip the band-aid off" with a single large increase or use an incremental approach, perhaps increasing rates over a year. She also asked if increases to the tiers of water usage should be used in addition to increases in the monthly base rate. Morton pointed out that adjusting the usage tiers was a flexible approach but could motivate residents to reduce their water usage leading to a reduction in revenue from water service.

At a workshop on May 25, Brandewie presented a revised water rate study that addresses some of the questions asked by the board. The revised study presents several scenarios ranging from simply balancing the water budget using only increases to the base rate to balancing the water budget using only increases to the usage tiers.

To cover year-to-year operational costs using only increases to the base rate, without saving anything for capital projects, and factoring in the 3% annual increase in the base rate already planned for but not implemented in previous years, the base rate would need to go to \$93.60, an increase of \$25.37 per month from the current base rate.

Adding savings of 2% for planned improvements to the water system to the previous scenario would increase the base rate to \$108.38, adding \$40.15 to the current base rate.

Trustee Shana Ball pointed out the need to address some issues in the short term while also planning for the long term.

The packet materials for the May 11 meeting documented feedback on the water rate study Town Administrator Dawn Collins had given to Brandewie, including:

- Use a 30-year planning window.
- Modify usage tiers to increase revenue.
- Consider varying rates for restaurants and senior citizens.
- Consider the priority 1 and 2 improvements in the water system Preliminary Engineering Report

Another approach Brandewie presented increased the number of usage tiers and their respective rates. Currently, there are three usage tiers:

- 0 to 5,000 gallons charged at \$8.40 per 1,000 gallons.
- 5,001 to 10,000 gallons charged at \$10.08 per 1,000 gallons.
- 10,001 gallons and up charged at \$12.10 per 1,000 gallons.

Brandewie proposed going to eight tiers, with the first tier being 0 to 3,999 gallons per month, and each subsequent tier providing an additional 1,000 gallons per month. The cost per 1,000 gallons of each tier would gradually increase from \$1.73 to \$3.99.



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This scenario would generate \$975,808 from base rates and another \$745,186 from usage.

Another scenario proposed increasing tiers by 3,000 gallons and increasing the cost per 1,000 gallons by 15% between tiers.

The last scenario addressed how much the tiers would have to increase to balance the water budget without increasing the base rate. In this model the cost of each tier would increase by 37.5%.

Brandewie asked the board to give him direction about which of these scenarios to pursue. He also suggested the board consider raising the rates for the few out-of-town customers.

Following Brandewie's presentation of his revised study, Havenar reiterated her preference for beginning with a large increase, arguing that the 3% increase in the base rate already scheduled was not adequate the balance the water budget. She said she wanted a solution that would not overwhelm a senior citizen who lives alone.

To address Havenar's concern, Brandewie suggested making the first usage tier free so low usage customers would pay only the base rate. He also pointed out that if high usage tiers were too costly, large customers would pursue getting their own wells.

The board will hold a virtual meeting with Brandewie on June 7 to continue the discussion of water rates. Check the town's website for meeting details.

Board sets direction for water system improvements

At the May 3 workshop, Morton reviewed the water system improvements called for in the PER he prepared for the town and discussed potential funding sources.

The PER lists three priority one improvements:

- A new well into the Arapahoe aquifer. Morton said a new well is urgently needed because if one of the town's existing wells was out of service the town will not have enough water to meet demand.
- Upgrades to the water treatment plant. Radium mitigation technology needs to be added to the treatment plant and additional treatment capacity is needed to provide redundancy.
- Six segments of pipeline need to be replaced. These segments are the most prone to failure.

The PER also listed three priority two improvements:

- Build pipeline loop at County Line Road.
- Build pipeline loop at Shady Lane.
- Build pipeline loop at the southern boundary of the service area, adjacent to Red Rocks Ranch.

Turning these existing pipelines into loops is necessary to avoid water quality issues in

the current pipelines, which have dead ends. The dead ends make it necessary to flush the pipelines of stale water, which wastes water. Pipelines that loop also provide a redundant water supply in the case of a pipeline break and help supply adequate water pressure to support firefighting.

The total preliminary cost estimate for priority one and two projects is just over \$6 million, according to the PER.

To fund the water system improvements, Morton recommended the town begin by seeking a loan. If grants can be found, those funds can be used to pay down the principal on the loan, reducing interest costs.

Collins pointed out that the longer the town waits to begin on these improvements, the higher the cost will be. Havenar asked her to begin investigating financing options.

At the board meeting on May 11, Havenar and the board passed a resolution directing Collins to work with Morton to investigate funding for all the proposed water system improvements. Morton offered to update the costs in the PER, which is now a year old, adding that costs may have increased by 5% to 10% due to inflation.

At the May 25 board meeting, the board decided to pursue drilling a new well into the Arapahoe aquifer. Collins said BBA Water Consultants Inc. identified a location in the northeast section of Palmer Lake near County Line Road as the best location for the well. Collins said that \$337,000 in American Recovery Plan Act funds were available to fund the well drilling investigation.

At the same board meeting, attorney Matt Krob proposed amending Ordinance 16-2018, an emergency ordinance that restricts the expansion of the water system. Krob said the emergency ordinance could be interpreted to prevent some of the planned water

system improvements. Collins said the ordinance obstructed the creation of pipeline loops.

Moseley objected to Krob's proposed amendment, saying he suspected the amended ordinance would enable development. He suggested town staff might be colluding with developers but offered no evidence this was true. He also argued the original ordinance says it must remain in place until the town has acquired new sources of water. Trustee Shana Ball pointed out that the proposed well could be thought of as a new water source.

Krob said he would redraft the ordinance and bring it to the board at a future meeting.

Design for stormwater drainage selected

The town's plan to improve the quality of its stormwater drainage was discussed at the May 3 workshop. A previous board began developing this plan in May 2022 in response to a report from John Chavez, of Chavez Consulting LLC, that found that the town was not complying with the terms of its Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit.

GMS did a study in April 2022 that presented three stormwater drainage designs to bring the town into compliance with its permit. Reporting on that study can be found in a previous issue of OCN here: <https://www.ocn.me/v22n5.htm#plbot>.

At the workshop, Morton said his understanding was that the board wanted to pursue the storm drainage design referred to as the "hybrid" design that would build a drainage system on High Street that would have underground and aboveground segments. The estimated cost is \$885,000.

Morton explained that the drainage project requires the creation of a stormwater drainage enterprise fund. Such a fund is a prerequisite for borrowing the money needed to

construct the drainage infrastructure. The fund would create a revenue source for the project by charging each resident a fee; those fees would cover debt service and the creation of a reserve to be used for future drainage improvements. The enterprise fund would cover the entire town's drainage issues, Morton said.

Morton emphasized that the town's MS4 permit obligates it to produce a good quality of stormwater discharge or face penalties. Krob said the entire town would be responsible for paying those penalties should violations occur.

At the May 25 meeting,

the board approved a resolution confirming their choice of the hybrid design. Collins was directed to provide the board more detail on the required enterprise fund. She said the enterprise fund would need to be set up for a year and audited before the town could pursue other loans or grants to fund the improvements to drainage.

Wedding venue proposed for Elephant Rock

At the May 11 board meeting, Havenar said out of the several proposals to develop the Elephant Rock property that the board had received, two were

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still under consideration: one from Franco Pisani and Lindsey Truitt and one from the Joy on the Rock, a church in Palmer Lake.

Pisani and Truitt told the board they wanted to use the property as a venue for weddings and other events, preserving and restoring the main building and perhaps moving the children's chapel as well. Pisani said his architect had inspected the site and he wanted direction from the board before committing to a more detailed analysis. Pisani said he envisioned having the site functioning as an event venue by the next bridal season and in later stages would add private suites and a chapel.

The board approved a motion to ask both Pisani and Joy on the Rock to present to the board at its next meeting.

At the May 25 meeting, Havenar said Joy on the Rock had withdrawn their proposal, but Pisani and Truitt were ready to present their plans for the property.

The materials for the meeting included biographies of Pisani and Truitt. In 1997 Pisani was the executive chef at The Villa in Palmer Lake. He left that position to become the food and beverage director at The Country Club at Woodmoor. In 2008 Jeff Hulsmann brought Pisani back to The Villa. Pisani now owns two restaurants in Old Colorado City—Paravicini's and Ristorante di Sopra. Truitt is a Colorado Springs native with 10 years' experience as an event coordinator.

Pisani and Truitt have named their project Star View Ranch.

John Nelson, the architect working with Pisani and Truitt, provided more details on the project. Nelson said his design would preserve the character of the old buildings. He said phase one would concentrate on the main building and phase two would involve moving two other buildings out of the flood plain to free up space for parking and for use as a park. He said one cabin

would be retained for use as a restroom. The boiler and its plumbing would be abandoned and forced air HVAC would be installed.

Pisani said he was happy to include the Parks Commission and the Fire Department in his planning and would like to participate in the master plan for the property. Pisani said he sought a 10-year lease, with two options to renew for 10 years. If the town decided to sell the property in the future, he asked for the option of a first refusal. He also asked that the town not allow any other food and beverage businesses on the Elephant Rock property.

The town can expect revenue from rent and sales tax, Pisani said. He committed to generating \$30,000 a year for the town after the first year of operation and said if revenues fell short of that amount, he would write a check to the town for the difference. He estimated \$1.3 million in revenue for the town over the 10-year term of the lease.

History of lake and town presented

Linda Vier, Jeannine Engel, Jason Phillips, and Jeff Hulsmann presented a history of Palmer Lake at the May 11 board meeting. The presentation covers the geological history of the lake, the history of the town from the Long Expedition in 1820 to 1901, the fundraising efforts to benefit the lake beginning in 1994, the current water levels, and the work done to awake the lake.

The presentation is on the town's website here: https://www.townofpalmerlake.com/sites/default/files/fileattachments/board_of_trustees/meeting/packets/7824/awake_the_lake_presentation_5-11-2023.pdf.

Special event permits

The board approved three special event permits:

- Pikes Peak Library District Story Time, to be held June 8 from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Village Green. Denise Gard will bring her dogs to help

tell the story of Dogs in the Wild.

- Palmer Lake Historical Society Father's Day Ice Cream Social, to be held June 18 from 2 to 4 p.m. in the Village Green. There will be live music, ice cream, and pie.
- Palmer Lake Arts Council Shakespeare in the Park, two shows to be held on June 24 at 1 and 6 p.m. in the Village Green.

Please bring a lawn chair or picnic blanket to all three events.

The next board meetings are scheduled for June 8 and 22. 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 atjameshowald@ocn.me. Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District, May 17

Directors elected; ambulance sale approved

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District (BF-FRPD) meeting on May 17, the board elected two directors, approved the sale of a surplus ambulance, and heard about a mass casualty incident (MCI) drill and the development of a regional training consortium.

Directors elected

Chairman Nate Dowden administered the oath of office to re-elected directors Vice Chairman James Abendschan and Treasurer Jack Hinton. Both directors were elected by decree and the May 2 election was canceled.

Board nominates director positions

Board Secretary Donna Arkowski said that officially, the board needed to nominate board positions.

The following directors were unanimously nominated: Dowden—chair, Kiersten Tarvainen—vice chair, and Hinton—treasurer.

Surplus ambulance sale approved

Deputy Chief of Operations Chris Piepenburg said Peyton Fire Protection District (PFPD) was interested in purchasing the surplus 2007 ambulance for \$5,000. The ambulance had about 285,000 miles less than the existing ambulance in service at PFPD, he said.

Hinton said the 2007 ambulance had been donated to Palmer Lake Fire Department in September 2020, but it was returned to the district. It is good to help neighbors, said Hinton. See www.ocn.me/v20n10.htm#bffrpd.

The board unanimously approved the sale.

Gary Nelson, president of Emergency Incident Support (EIS), said the nonprofit organization he leads would have thankfully received the am-

bulance as a donation if PFPD had not been interested.

Mass casualty incident drill

Dowden asked if a regional MCI training event was scheduled.

Piepenburg said the district was involved with active-shooter refresher training taking place that week with Monument Fire District, Monument Police Department, Palmer Lake Police Department and El Paso County Sheriff's Office. The district had attended previous events and will also participate in a large-scale MCI drill in June, involving multiple agencies region-wide to include area hospitals. The regional drill was developed by EMS Battalion Chief Sean Pearson and EMS Coordinator Stephanie Soll of MFD, he said. See MFD article on page 17.

Nelson thanked the board for the great work they do and said EIS will support the MCI with logistics, catering, and rehab support. The group's 35 volunteers will act as mass casualties. The MCI regional drill will be held at Don Breese Stadium at Lewis-Palmer High School, Monument, from June 12 to 16, he said.

Financial report

Hinton said as of April 30, the district had about \$3.5 million in total assets, and that includes \$1.3 million for General Operations and the reserve funds:

- Money market deposit account, \$137,235.
- Emergency reserves fund, \$236,751.
- Capital improvement fund, \$193,803.
- TABOR reserve fund, \$137,400.

The district received \$471,744 in property and specific ownership taxes, and about \$6,044

in ambulance revenue. The 2022 Pierce Enforcer 4395 has a loan for \$356,731 and is shown in the total assets for the district. The true district assets are shown in the 2021 audit conducted in 2022. The district has spent about 31% of the predicted annual budget year to date, about 2% less than anticipated, he said.

The board unanimously accepted the financial report as presented.

Wildland deployment reimbursements

Hinton requested Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn record the wildland deployment reimbursements received and the month the deployments occurred on the balance sheet. He explained the deployment line on the balance versus actuals sheet now lists deployments separately to show net income or losses. The precise breakout will provide a true depiction of how much the district makes or loses on deployments. State wildland fire deployment payments can take about six months to receive, and Federal Emergency Management Agency payments could take up to a year. The district had yet to receive payment of \$45,128 for the last deployment, he said.

Dowden requested a better breakout on the balance sheet because the \$380,060 listed on the balance sheet as receivable income was for deployments billed last year that had not been received.

Piepenburg said it is unfortunate the billing process for wildland deployments is not easy. The bills are loaded into the system and sent to a reviewer and turned around in 30 days. If the reviewer does not send the bill back for correction, the correction is made by the district before being re-submitted to another reviewer.

The return process can happen again after being reviewed by another agency. If the process proceeds without delays, it can take just 30 days, he said.

Dunn said billing is usually submitted within 7-14 days, but typically 90% of the bills are returned due to incorrect Government Services Administration rates (per diem reimbursement rates). The deploying crews are required to have a resource order before responding to a fire. The coding process is the last step in the process and involves clarification from the agency responsible for fighting the fire. The bills can be returned at any phase in the process, but once accepted by the state, payment is usually received in 14 days, she said.

Dowden said the reimbursement process is a laborious paper chase.

Hinton thanked Dunn and said the breakout on the balance sheet will allow careful monitoring of deployment reimbursements, help the board make educated funding decisions, and assist with budget planning. The wildland deployment reimbursements are negative year to date, he said.

If the district submits the bills on time, it will not be cut off, and eventually it will receive payment, said Piepenburg.

Department report

Dunn said the following:

- The 2005 mid-mount ariel ladder truck was received April 28 and is housed in the bay at Station 1.
- The district received new uniforms.
- Students at "The School in the Woods" received wildfire education.
- Remodeling work continued in the training room.

Operations update

Piepenburg said the district re-

sponded to 10 fire-related calls and 53 Emergency Medical Service (EMS) calls in April. The district assisted Falcon Fire Protection District with a residential structure fire in Falcon and extinguished a small RV fire within the district. In April, the district deployed two crews to the Gageby Creek Fire, Las Animas/Bent County, for 72 hours with a Type 3 and 6 apparatus. A crew also assisted with the Rampart Range Fire, Teller County, for 24 hours in April, he said.

Training update

Piepenburg said staff had completed a combined total of about 1,281 training hours in April:

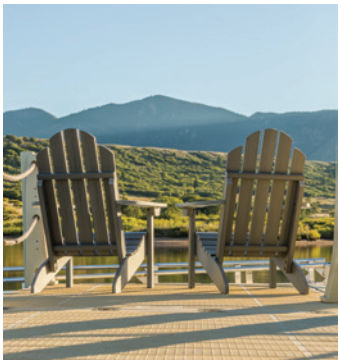
- Colorado Springs Fire Department (CSFD) Fire Academy attended Live Fire behavior training in April at the district training center, and the students were scheduled to return for additional training May 20-21 and again for two days in June before graduation.
- Staff completed the ongoing monthly North Group EMS Airway training with Centura Health and MFD EMS staff.
- MFD worked on second-floor Live Fire training for three days.
- The district is joining a regional training consortium with MFD, CSFD, and possibly Fort Carson Fire Department in the future. The consortium is a path to training and working together more often, with similar training structures and mind set. The district regularly trains with MFD.

Hinton asked if districts with similar terrain and vegetation are taken into consideration



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BFFRPD (Cont. from 14)

when choosing training partners and if line staff also deploy to gain experience.

Piepenburg said the district does not pay too much attention to terrain, but more so structural and EMS training with regional partners. The district usually selects one large wildland training event in the

spring with CSFD and MFD. The wildland techs hired to fill the deployment roster are the first to deploy with a Type 3 engine, but the line staff that want to deploy to gain experience take a Type 6 brush truck, he said.

The meeting adjourned at 7:41 p.m.

Meetings are usually held on the third Wednesday of the month at Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colora-

do Springs. Meetings are open to the public in person or via Zoom. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 21 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.

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

Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, May 24

Gleneagle annexation timeline unknown; merger process continues

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) meeting on May 24, the board discussed the timeline for the annexation of Gleneagle, received an update on the dissolution of the sub-district, held an election to determine board director positions, heard about the potential for revenue loss, and received updates on station remodels and new apparatus. The meeting was preceded by the volunteer firefighter pension fund board of trustees meeting.

Directors Charles Fleece and Treasurer Duane Garrett attended via Zoom.

Election of officers

District Attorney Emily Powell of Ireland Stapleton Pryor Pascoe PC law firm requested the board decide the officer positions. After a short discussion, the directors unanimously elected to retain the same positions.

Annexation update

DWFPD Volunteer Pension Board Trustee Dennis Feltz (attending remotely) asked for clarification on the comments made by Monument Fire District (MFD) board Vice President Roger Lance. See www.ocn.me/v23n5.htm#mfd.

President Mark Gunderman said there is no current negotiation regarding any annexation, but the City of Colorado Springs may be interested in annexing Gleneagle in one to 10 years. An annexation would impact all the work the combined districts have undertaken. Fire Chief Andy Kovacs and Gunderman had a discussion over coffee with Town of Monument Manager Mike Foreman, but there is no interest in annexation. The board represents the community for fire service, and Gunderman said he would like to see the merger between Wescott and Monument Fire District progress, to best serve the residents. Town Hall meetings will be held to inform the public of the options, and discuss what the future may look like, he said.

Kovacs said the concern regarding annexation arose from an article and a map that was published in December 2021 by The Gazette.

Note: The map showing potential annexation areas can be found on page 50 of Your El Paso Master Plan at <https://planningdevelopment.elpasoco.com>.

Sub-district dissolution process update

Powell said the petition for dissolution was submitted to the court, and the hearing is set for June 23. Her associate attorney Dino Ross will represent the district via Zoom. The court hearing notice will be published in a newspaper, in Colorado Springs and Monument, before the hearing. See www.ocn.me/v23n5.htm#dwfpd.

Gunderman asked about engaging a public relations firm to help inform the public after the hearing.

Powell said that after the court approval grants the petition, the court orders the election, and then the board and district cannot engage in one-on-one campaigning. A Resolution of Advocacy with campaign-style language can be disseminated, but not by the district. Any interested party or member of the press can request a copy of the Resolution of Advocacy through the Colorado Open Records Act, but any campaign must be away from the district and the

board. A factual summary can be disseminated by the district. Beyond that, information must be away from the board and delivered by groups such as the Local 4319, homeowners associations, and other interested parties, she said.

Gunderman said he would discuss getting the message out to the residents with Kovacs after the meeting.

Potential for revenue loss

Kovacs said there is a potential for revenue loss for fire districts in 2024 with Senate Bill 303 and Proposition HH. The bill is a 10-year reduction in property taxes, and some districts could receive back-fill from the state, the stipulation being no more than a 20% increase in assessed property values, but locally values have risen beyond that. The implications are unknown, and every district is scrambling to decipher the complicated language, he said.

Powell said that SB 303 is a massive piece of tax legislation that passed in both the House and Senate and was signed by Gov. Jared Polis on May 2. The bill refers to the voters in November with Proposition HH, with these questions:

- Shall property taxes be reduced by reducing assessment rates?
 - Shall we de-Bruce the state by 1% and generate about \$167 million in revenue?
 - Shall we use that \$167 million to back-fill certain local governments that might lose out due to property tax reductions?
 - Other parts are also included in the referendum.
- Taking this to the voters in November creates problems for the 2024 budget process, because the district will not know how much revenue will be generated by property tax assessments in time for preliminary budgeting. If the referendum passes, every assessor in the state will be scrambling to re-assess properties. SB 303 may not make the November ballot due to 12 challenges from statewide counties claiming the bill violates the single subject law; it contains at least three, possibly five subjects. Proposition 103 maybe even more damaging, creating a hard 3% cap in revenue increases for local government, she said.

Powell said her law practice is preparing a practical guide to SB 303 to give clients a brief synopsis, such as:

- How do I budget for the year?
- What are the deadlines for certifying mill levies?
- Will the de-Gallagher measure allow the raising of mill levies, or has the new legislation undone previous voter approval?
- The legislation may also prevent districts raising revenue beyond inflation.

About 20 clients are participating in a cost share for the guide that will be available in a month.

Gunderman said it would be beneficial to have the guide.

Powell said the combined district could share the information and only pay for one cost share.

Chief's report

Kovacs presented the board with the April Chief's report, and said:

- Multiple station projects are in the planning process, with plans to remodel Station 2, 4 (Gleneagle Drive) and "Shamrock" Station 5 on Highway 83.
- The district will probably build a new Station 3 in 2023 if the district can secure the land. The new station will incorporate the district administrative offices to accommodate the combined district staff with the consolidation, and additional staff will be needed.
- The combined district ambulances typically last about five years, and the district will receive one ambulance at the end of the year and another is budgeted for 2024.
- The new Type 1 Pierce Engine 514 was placed into service at Station 4 on April 29, with a community "push-in" ceremony. Squad car 575 was also pushed into service during the ceremony and has been placed at Station 5.

- The district is expecting a Type 3 wildland engine this year after a delay of two years.
- The tower ladder truck pre-construction meeting will take place in October and construction is expected to take about six months. The existing ladder truck at Station 1 will be placed in reserve, and the 75-foot ladder truck that DWFPD owned will be sold.
- The community chipping program has begun and will continue most weekends, except for holidays, through October. The chipper will be staffed by two firefighters, and on some occasions two chippers will be in operation.

For more information, see the MFD article on page 17. The full report can be viewed at www.monument-fire.org.

Volunteer pension board of trustees meeting

At the bi-annual DWFPD volunteer pension board of trustees meeting, the board heard about the passing of a former volunteer firefighter, discussed the status and funding of the Firefighters and Police Pension Association (FPPA) volunteer pension fund, received a trustee resignation, and approved a new trustee.

Former volunteer firefighter passes away

The board passed on their condolences to the family of former volunteer firefighter Larry Coburn. Coburn was also a retired law safety officer and is survived by his wife.

Pension fund status

Trustee Mike Badger said the FPPA had been requesting the board add funds to the FPPA volunteer pension fund since 2015, but none has been added. The fund has no further liability after the volunteer firefighter hiring program was closed. The 2023 budget did not include funding for the FPPA fund, and additional funding should be discussed during the 2024 budget process, he said. See www.ocn.me/v22n12.htm#dwfpd.

Powell said she takes no position on whether the board should pay into the FPPA fund now or not, there is no obligation, but the board has a fiduciary responsibility to keep the pension fully funded. However, on completion of the merger MFD will manage the FPPA fund. If at that time the FPPA fund is underfunded, the board would need to ensure it is fully funded before the merger is complete, she said.

Badger thanked Powell for the explanation and said that any decisions regarding changes to the 2022 Allocation Report could not be made until after the actuarial study had been received. The next actuarial study is expected in September or October.

Kovacs confirmed that no harm would come to the volunteer pension fund and the commitment from MFD will exist in perpetuity, he said.

Note: At the end of the regular meeting, Powell corrected her previous comment made during the volunteer pension board meeting and said that the pre-inclusion agreement stipulating MFD manage the pension fund cannot be drafted until after the November ballot, and only if the dissolution of the northern sub-district passes.

The board received the resignation of trustee Bill Lowes, and unanimously approved the appointment of Dennis Feltz to the vacant trustee position.

The next pension meeting is scheduled for Oct. 25 at 4 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Meetings are usually held every other month on the fourth Wednesday at Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for July 26 at 4:30 p.m. Meeting attendance is open to the public in person or via Zoom. For joining instruction, 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.

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Monument Fire District, May 24

Board director positions change; contractor hiring flexibility approved

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Monument Fire District (MFD) meeting on May 24, the board held an election to determine board positions; approved a resolution to allow flexibility in selecting contractors for the remodeling of Stations 2, 4, and 5; received multiple updates; and was introduced to the fire technician.

Directors Randall Estes, Tom Tharnish, and Mike Smaldino attended remotely.

Board of Directors' position election

Kovacs said the directors can self-nominate or be nominated by the board, and if more than one director is interested in a position, a secret vote would be taken.

President John Hildebrandt self-nominated himself as board president and said he would like to continue as president until at least the consolidation process with Donald Wescott Fire Protection District is complete. He, Roger Lance, and Donald Wescott Fire Protection District board President Mark Gunderman started the process on Jan. 9, 2021, when they saw an opportunity to make a merger work. See www.ocn.me/v22n1.htm#tlmfpd and [dwfpd](http://www.ocn.me/dwfpd).

Director Jason Buckingham nominated Secretary Smaldino for board president.

Smaldino accepted the nomination and said he agreed with everything Hildebrandt said, but he was in position to commit more to the board compared with even two months ago. After nine years serving on the board it feels like a natural step, he said, and he would like the opportunity to lead the district in the same direction it has been going.

Smaldino was elected board president in a 4-3 secret paper/text vote.

Hildebrandt congratulated Smaldino on his new board position.

Smaldino thanked the board and Hildebrandt for everything he had done for the district and said he wanted to use his skill sets to get over some of the hurdles ahead.

Vice President Roger Lance declined to run again for his position, and Hildebrandt accepted Buckingham's nomination for vice president. Treasurer Tom Kelly elected to retain his position, and Buckingham self-nominated himself as secretary. The Board of Directors are: President Mike Smaldino, Vice President John Hildebrandt, Treasurer Tom Kelly, Secretary Jason Buckingham, and Directors Randy Estes, Roger Lance, and Tom Tharnish.

Contractor hiring flexibility

Hildebrandt requested the board consider Resolution 2023-03, a resolution for integrated project delivery for the remodel of Stations 2, 4, and 5. The resolution allows the district to reject lower bids should the final product be optimal with another contractor. The resolution would not isolate the district into accepting the minimum bid from a construction company, he said.

Kovacs said the resolution allows the district to hire contractors that are considered the most capable of performing the project, contractors that choose the best product and have the most experience. It allows flexibility as the district begins remodeling the three stations. As each bid is received, the district will present it to the board, he said.

Lance said the lowest bidder usually turns out to be higher with all the additions and change orders.

The board unanimously approved the resolution.

Station 1 training center update

Kovacs said the district had requested cost estimates from the architects for the initial phase of the Station 1 training center design process. The architects will provide a rough estimate of initial costs to help budget for 2024. The district is planning a phased approach, with prioritization for the props. The cost of materials could be considerably higher in 2023, he said.

Buckingham asked if all the grading and flat work would be laid out as part of the initial phase, and then add structures, or just approach the property in chunks. Once the earth is moved it makes sense to add utilities before adding structures, he said.

Kovacs said the first phase would include earth work, a retention pond, the installation of utilities and a form of a training tower out of Conex containers. Classrooms are a priority, and a warehouse to store equipment, apparatus, and include a workshop for repairs. Phase 2 would include technical rescue, various firefighter training props, and a vehicle extrication area, he said.

Financial report

Kelly said as of April 30, the district is 33.3% of the way through the predicted budget for 2023, and all revenue is tracking as expected, except for impact fees that are deficient by about 20% with about \$24,000 received year to date. The projected revenue for impact fees is about \$200,000. Overall revenue received year to date is about \$7.1 million. The projected annual revenue is about \$16.5 million. Expenses for administration and building were slightly over but are coming back into line with budget projections. The largest expense is for general liabilities and benefits, which were higher than expected due to the 2023 budget passing before receiving the actual amounts due for 2023. The increases were due to accident and health insurance for the additional firefighters on the payroll, some additional IT expenses, vehicles, and rebranding. Overall year to date, expenses were about \$4.9 million, or about 34.9% of the projected expense budget of about \$14 million.

Kelly also noted the Fleet Capital Fund dropped from about \$1.6 million to \$845,966 after the 2018 and the 2019 Pierce fire engines were paid off for a total of about \$825,000.

Kovacs said the district is carrying about \$1.6 million in debt for the new tower ladder truck that is expected in 2024, and about \$800,000 for the Pierce Type 1 Engine 514 placed into service at Station 4, and the administrative offices. The district hopes for increased revenue next year to begin paying off the debt before a new Station 3 is built (administration offices are included in the design), he said.

The board accepted the financial report as presented.

Fire technician introduction

Kovacs said that during the budget process for 2023, the district requested a fire technician position be added to alleviate some time-consuming clerical responsibilities the shift battalion chiefs and administrative staff were performing. He introduced the first district Fire Technician Carlos Amaya and said he was an outstanding applicant and has remained busy every day since starting in the position in mid-May.

Amaya said his ultimate goal is to become a firefighter and he is looking forward to learning more about the fire service. He is focused on becoming an asset to the district, helping out in any way he can, he said.

The board welcomed Amaya to the district.

Chief's report

Kovacs updated the board as follows:

- The district is hosting a Mass Casualty Incident (MCI) from June 12-16. Development of the event within the district was a recommendation in the 2019 Master Plan by Emergency Services Consulting International. See BFFRPD article on page 14.
- Battalion Chief Sean Pearson and EMS Coordinator Stephanie Soll have developed a regional plan for a county-wide MCI that involves the Office of Emergency Management, multiple agencies, and Centura and UC Health hospitals. He is proud of their achievements.
- The district completed 813 hours of training in April, and he thanked Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD) for hosting the Live Fire Training days in April.
- The district is working on a proposal for a multi-agency training consortium with Colorado Springs Fire Department and BFFRPD.
- The retirement ceremony for retired Battalion Chief Mike Keough was a great success. Keough is attending a Police Training Academy and will continue to serve the district as a peace officer with the Monument Police Department. See a photo of the ceremony on page 27.
- A retirement ceremony will be held at Station 1, on June 28 at 8 a.m. for Battalion Chief Mike Dooley.
- With Dooley's retirement, the district hired Jarred Picker; a licensed Firefighter/Paramedic previously employed at Larkspur Fire Protection District. Picker will attend the West Metro Academy in August.
- Two deserving students from Lewis-Palmer and Palmer Ridge High Schools were each awarded \$1,500 scholarships from the International Firefighter Association Local 4319.

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Note: For additional information, see the DWFPD article on page 16. The full report can be viewed at www.monument-fire.org.

Future revenue concerns

Kovacs said a 10-year Senate Bill 303, with direct impact

on property taxes, is intended to lower the impact on homeowners after the sky-rocketing property tax assessments that were due to the sharp rise in home values. If Proposition HH passes in November, the El Paso County assessor would need to re-assess prop-

erty taxes at the end of the year, and districts will be setting mill levies five days into 2024. The district is waiting for legal counsel to provide more clarification on the details. See DWFPD article on page 16. The meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday of every month at Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for June 28 at 6:30 p.m. Meeting attendance is open to the public in person or via Zoom.

For joining 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.

Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, May 8

Board reorganized; request for supplemental water considered

By James Howald
The Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) board opened its May meeting with an election of board officers. The board heard a request for supplemental water from Lake Woodmoor Development Inc., (LWD) and briefly considered a request to host a sheepherder on its Woodmoor Ranch property. It decided how to disburse a refund from CEBT and heard operational reports.

The meeting ended with an executive session to develop negotiating positions on potential agreements with Monument Fire District, Lewis-Palmer School District 38, and Enerfin Renewables LLC and to discuss a personnel matter.

Town replaces term-limited board president
Barrie Town was elected to serve as WWSD board president, replacing Brian Bush, who served two terms as president and was term limited. Town has served on the WWSD board previously.

The board elected Tom Martinez to serve as treasurer. Martinez joined the board earlier in 2023.

Bill Clewe was elected to a

second term as secretary.
Waterside development gets supplemental water
District Engineer Ariel Hacker presented LWD's request for supplemental water service to the board. LWD plans to build 52 multifamily units on four acres of land on the east side of Woodmoor Drive adjacent to Lewis-Palmer Middle School. The development is named Waterside. WWSD's standard water service is ½ acre-foot of water per year for each acre of land. LWD is requesting an additional 14 acre-feet of water per year for Waterside, Hacker said.

District Manager Jessie Shaffer said the district's long-range plan anticipated that the land in question would be developed at the density LWD is intending, so the request is "not outside what we planned." Shaffer said LWD's request would bring the district \$595,000 annually in water fees, in addition to 52 one-time tap fees at the multifamily rate of \$22,341 per tap. Shaffer said the multi-family tap fee is 25% less than the tap fee for a single-family residence, due to the expectation that there will be less outdoor irrigation.

The board voted unani-

mously to approve a motion to accept LWD's request and bring back a supplemental water agreement for a final vote at the June board meeting.

Sheepherder gets a thumbs down

Shaffer told the board that JUWI Solar Inc., a company that leases a portion of WWSD's Woodmoor Ranch property for a large solar array, had requested that WWSD host a sheepherder on WWSD's portion of the ranch. The sheep would help JUWI control noxious weeds.

The board had several concerns with this arrangement, including security, insurance liability, and the potential impact of sheep droppings on water quality. Operations Superintendent Dan LaFontaine said giving the sheepherder the access requested would interfere with ranch operations.

The board directed Shaffer to deny the request.

CEBT dividend goes to employees

Shaffer told the board he had recently received a check for \$9,600 from CEBT, the company that administers WWSD's benefits program. Shaffer said

CEBT's rates are based on financial projections, and when actual costs are lower than the projections, CEBT returns the overage to the district. Shaffer said this had happened three times in the last 10 years and asked for the board's thoughts on how the surplus should be handled. Shaffer suggested returning the funds to employees, arguing that the surplus would have gone to employees in their paychecks if CEBT had calculated their costs more precisely.

The board authorized Shaffer to return the surplus to employees.

Highlights of operational reports

- LaFontaine said surface water from Lake Woodmoor would be added to the blend delivered to customers in June.
- Wells 12 and 18 are temporarily out of production for maintenance.
- Hacker told the board that planning for a new well into the Dawson aquifer was underway with BBA Water Consultants Inc. The well will be adjacent to the Central Water Treatment Plant on Deer Creek Road just north-

west of Lewis-Palmer Middle School's football field.
• Hacker noted that some of the apartments in the Monument Junction development were on hold, but the Whataburger and Maverick filling station are still moving ahead.

Executive session

The May meeting ended in an executive session to consider strategies relative to negotiations and for a conference with legal counsel concerning potential agreements with the Monument Fire District, Lewis-Palmer School District 38, and Enerfin Renewables LLC, and for discussion of a personnel matter.

The next meeting is scheduled for June 12 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.

Donala Water and Sanitation District, May 18

Board reorganizes; aquifer storage and recovery study presented

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans
The Donala Water and Sanitation District (DWSD) board swore in newly elected board members and reorganized at its May meeting. It heard the results of a study of aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) and a report from its auditor on its 2022 finances. The board discussed a template for a Request for Qualification form that will be used when seeking engineering and consulting services. The board appointed District Manager Jeff Hodge to serve as its representative on the Upper Monument Creek Regional Waste Water Treatment Facility (UMCRWWTF) Operations Committee and approved a bid to add a flow control vault and pipeline to well 16A.

The meeting ended with an executive session to receive legal advice on the UMCRWWTF Intergovernmental Agreement.

New members sworn in, officers elected, and Kenneth Judd honored
Kevin Deardorff, Bill George, and Scott McCollough took their oaths of office at the



Above: At the May 18 meeting of the Donala board, President Wayne Vanderschuere swore in Bill George, Scott McCullough, and Kevin Deardorff as board members. George and Deardorff were re-elected, and McCullough is new to the board. Following the swearing-in, the board elected Vanderschuere to serve a second term as president; George and Deardorff continued as vice president and treasurer/secretary, respectively. Photo by Jackie Burhans.

May meeting. Deardorff and George were re-elected; McCollough is new to the board. Following the swearing in, the board elected officers. Wayne Vanderschuere was elected to serve a second term as president. Bill George was elected vice president. Deardorff was elected as treasurer and secretary. George and Deardorff will serve second terms in their respective offices.

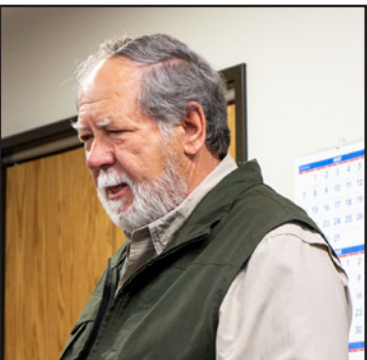
The board passed a reso-

lution expressing its appreciation for the service of Director Kenneth Judd, who stepped up to fill a seat on the board vacated by the resignation of Ed Houle when Houle moved out of the district. Judd intended to fill the position until the next election, and that is what he did. Judd had served on the DWSD board previously, and Vanderschuere commented on Judd's contributions to a range of issues, including district financing, the prepara-

tion of 10 district budgets, the planning of mill levy overrides and fees, and negotiations with surrounding districts. In his farewell remarks, Judd encouraged the board to understand it serves future generations as well as today's residents.

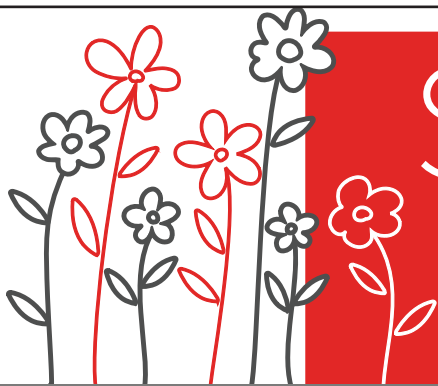
ASR feasible, study shows

Joel Barber, a hydrogeologist, and Allan Foster, a water



Above: At the Donala May 18 board meeting, the board recognized and thanked outgoing board member Kenneth Judd whose term had ended. Judd stepped up to fill a seat on the board vacated by the resignation of Ed Houle when Houle moved out of the district. Judd had served on the DWSD board previously, and Vanderschuere commented on Judd's contributions to a range of issues, including district financing, the preparation of 10 district budgets, the planning of mill levy overrides and fees, and negotiations with surrounding districts. In his farewell remarks, Judd encouraged the board to understand that it serves future generations as well as today's residents. Photo by Jackie Burhans.

DONALA (Cont. on 20)



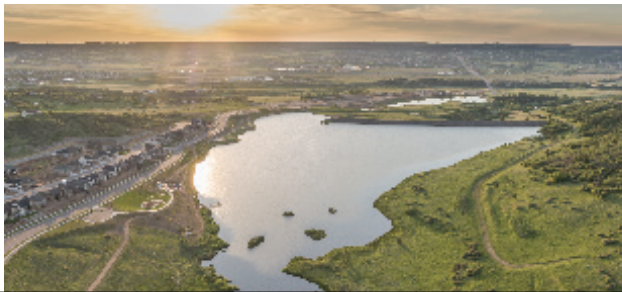
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DONALA (Cont. from 18)

quality expert, both of LRE Water, presented the results of a study of ASR commissioned by DWSD. ASR involves pumping excess surface water into aquifers using an existing well, which is later extracted from the same or a remote well and delivered to customers. ASR minimizes water losses to evaporation compared to storage in a reservoir and is valuable in extended droughts.

Barber explained that a study done in 2013 showed aquifers were depleting and identified this as a risk to long-term water supply. As water levels in aquifers decline, it becomes more expensive to use wells as a source of water. Three DWSD wells were tested between 2019 and 2022, and their water levels were seen to be dropping from 4 to 24 feet per year, resulting in pumping cost increases between \$200 and \$1,000 per year per well. Barber predicted 300 feet of decline in the aquifers that supply DWSD over the next 30 years given current usage. This is a regional trend, Barber said.

Barber estimated that implementing ASR would provide \$1,000 in savings per year per well due to a potential 20-foot rise in water level. He estimated construction of a pilot ASR facility at \$455,000. Cost of an acre-foot of stored and extracted water would start at \$2,500 during the first year of implementation and would decline to a steady state of \$800 per acre-foot by year 11 of implementation.

Barber said only treated water would be stored in aquifers, and DWSD’s treated water was compatible with the water currently in DWSD’s aquifers.

Three agencies are involved in the permitting process for ASR implementations, Barber said: the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, whose goal is to protect the health of customers; the Division of Water Resources, which addresses water quantity issues; and the Environmental Protection Agency, which focuses on water quality. There must be a single permit holder that is liable for risks, Barber said.

The presentation included a proposed 10-year implementation road map that includes a pilot phase from 2023 to 2028, a build-out and integration phase from 2028 to 2033, and an ongoing implementation phase beginning 2033.

Barber and Foster recommended DWSD move

forward with an ASR pilot and pursue options for regional cooperation. ASR would give DWSD a storage option within the district that DWSD would control. Triview Metropolitan District, DWSD’s neighbor to the west, was a likely choice for collaboration, they said. They recommended that a third-party consultant administer the program if more than one district participates. They discussed the possibility of grants from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation or the Colorado Conservation Board.

The board took no specific action following the presentation, but the consensus was that it would continue to work with LRE to implement ASR.

Audit shows financial health

Tom Sistare of Hoelting & Co. Inc. gave the board the results of DWSD’s 2022 finances. Sistare described DWSD as “a district that is in good shape, run by a healthy board.”

Sistare said the field work for the audit was done at the DWSD in mid-March. He questioned the staff, looked at the books and did walkthroughs of internal controls. The audit procedures were based on the results of his investigation.

Sistare gave a clean report on the district’s internal controls and an unmodified or clean report on the district’s financial statements.

Sistare said the DWSD’s total net position, or equity in the district, had increased by \$1.6 million from 2021. He noted capital expenditures were up \$2.7 million compared to the previous year and 2022’s tap fees were one-third of the previous year, an indication of less new construction in DWSD’s service area.

Vanderschuere asked about the impact the funds DWSD has received from the American Recovery Plan Act would have on the district’s finances. Sistare said those funds would require a grant-specific audit that drills down on compliance with federal regulations and internal controls. He recommended reviewing the district’s compliance with federal procurement policies. Hodge pointed out DWSD’s procurement procedures were recently reviewed and updated for federal compliance.

Sistare told the board he would file the audit report with the state as required.

RFQ template approved

Hodge said federal policies require the district to use a standard request for qualification (RFQ) form when

contracting for professional engineering and specialized consulting services. A draft form was included in the board packet that specifies evaluation criteria such as relevant experience, firm capabilities, technical qualifications, and quality of the submittal.

DWSD Attorney Linda Glesne said her firm was familiar with this federal standard and could advise the district.

Hodge said that the district will implement radium removal using hydrous manganese oxide, and the template would be used during the bidding process to hire the engineers needed for that project. He added that when the district was working with state guidelines, an RFQ was not needed.

The board voted in favor of a motion to refine the RFQ form for final approval in June.

Hodge appointed to Operations Committee

The board voted unanimously in favor of a resolution naming Hodge as the DWSD representative on the UMCRRWTF Operations Committee. The committee oversees the operation of the waste treatment facility that DWSD currently shares with Triview Metropolitan District, Forest Lakes Metropolitan District, and Academy Water and Sanitation District.

Bid awarded

Hodge asked the board to approve a bid from KR Swerdfeger Construction LLC to construct a concrete vault for well 16A that will contain flow control, surge and pressure and waste pumping valves, as well as some additional pipeline, at a price of \$355,143. The board voted unanimously to award the bid as Hodge requested.

The next meeting is scheduled for June 12 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.

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

Monument Sanitation District, May 17

New board members sworn in

By Jackie Burhans and James Howald

Three board members took their oaths of office at Monument Sanitation District’s (MSD) May meeting. Once its new members were sworn in, the board reorganized. A resolution authorizing an upgrade to the district’s internet service was passed. The board planned for a public celebration of its 60th anniversary serving the community and heard operational reports.

Board reorganizes

Tony Archer, Dan Hamilton, and Janet Ladowski were sworn in for four-year terms. Archer was previously appointed to the board on Feb. 15 to replace Director Laura Kronick, who resigned from the MSD board to serve on the Monument Town Council. As an appointee, Archer was required to run for a seat at the next election. Hamilton was also an incumbent, having served as the MSD board president for the previous four years. Ladowski replaced Marylee Reisig.

Following the oaths, the board reorganized, electing Hamilton to serve another term as president, incumbent John Howe as treasurer, and Ladowski as secretary.

Board votes to upgrade internet service

The board voted in favor of Resolution 23-051723, which accepts a bid from Force Broadband LLC to provide internet service to the MSD headquarters building using a fiber connection. Previously, the buildings’ internet service used wireless connectivity. Fiber-based internet service is much faster and more

reliable.

District Manager Mark Parker explained that the installation cost would be shared with Lolley’s Ice Cream who will use fiber in its new event center, where Ice Cave Cider used to be, next to the MSD building. Parker said Black Forest Foods Café and Deli, which occupies half of the MSD headquarters building, is considering switching to fiber internet service, which will lower costs.

Hamilton, part owner of Force Broadband LLC, recused himself from the vote on the resolution but answered technical questions about the service during the discussion. The materials for the meeting included a conflict-of-interest disclosure form for Hamilton. The form is registered with the Colorado secretary of state.

60 years of service to be celebrated

Director Howe told the board about the plans he and Parker are making for the district to host a public celebration of MSD’s 60th anniversary. The celebration is planned for Saturday, July 29, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the courtyard of the headquarters building at 130 Second St. The district’s customers will receive invitations in their June billing statements. Monument Town Council members and County Commissioner Holly Williams will also be invited, Howe said. Complimentary hamburgers and hotdogs will be provided by the Black Forest Foods Café and Deli, which will also be open to serve its lunch menu.

Parker said the event will also have an educational side, with information provided about the district’s

operations.

Highlights of operational reports

- Parker told the board that MSD had received a \$995.88 Safety and Loss Prevention grant from the Colorado Special Districts Pool. Parker said he used the funds to purchase a first aid kit and is working with the Monument Fire Department to identify an Automated External Defibrillator that is compatible with their equipment.
- Parker remarked that the recent heavy rains had stressed the district’s lift stations but none had failed.
- Parker also noted that the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition software that automates much of the district’s operation had been impacted by the failure of an Uninterruptable Power Supply (UPS). One lift station was affected by the issue. The battery was replaced in the UPS to return it to service.

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 June 21. 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.

Triview Metropolitan District, May 18

Former directors recognized; new directors sworn in

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Triview Metropolitan District (TMD) meeting on May 18, the board recognized outgoing directors Marco Fiorito and James Otis for their eight years of service on the board, administered the oath of office

to the new directors, approved a license to construct and operate a pump house, and discussed a request from Conexus to dissolve a sub-district. The board also held an executive session to discuss multiple matters and receive legal advice.

Director recognition

President Mark Melville said that in the past 10 years, the district had widened Jackson Creek Parkway, obtained water rights, and developed and begun the installation of the Northern Delivery System (NDS)



Above: President Mark Melville presents former board Directors Marco Fiorito (top) and James Otis with plaques recognizing eight years of service on the Triview Metropolitan District board at the May 18 meeting. Directors were term-limited on this board. *Photos by Natalie Barszcz.*



Above: President Mark Melville administers the oath of office to newly elected board Directors Jason Gross and Amanda Carlton at the May 18 Triview Metropolitan District meeting. *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*

pipeline enterprise; and the Stonewall Springs South Reservoir system is ready to pump water to the district. He thanked both outgoing board directors for being instrumental in moving the district forward.

Vice President Anthony Sexton thanked Otis and Fiorito for their guidance and the dedication to the district and for being good board members,

Treasurer/Secretary James Barnhart said the district did not have a single share of renewable water seven years ago, and the achievements since then have been amazing. He thanked Otis and Fiorito for the long board meetings that sometimes ran as late as 11 p.m.

New directors on board

Melville welcomed new board members Amanda Carlton and Jason Gross and administered the oath of office.

Election results

District Administrator Joyce Levad confirmed the number of votes received for the May 2 election as follows: Amanda Carlton 233, Ann-Marie Jojola 97, Jason Gross 259. Barrett Edwards withdrew before the election. Any votes cast for Edwards were not counted.

Future pump station license

District Manager James McGrady requested the board approve an annual fee of \$1,200 for a land lease agreement for a 25-year term to allow the district to build and operate a pump station on the Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) property where a 3-million-gallon tank sits behind a knoll off Highway 83 at the intersection of Old Northgate Road, Colorado Springs. The tank is about 15 years old, and is an underutilized asset supplying the Flying Horse development.

The board unanimously approved the lease agreement.

NDS project updates

McGrady said the district is about three weeks into the NDS pipeline project, laying pipe from B plant up to Sanctuary Pointe, and a second crew installing pipe up to C plant. A 2,000-foot bore behind the homes in Sanctuary Pointe has begun and will take about 11 days to complete. For all NDS pipeline project updates and to sign-up for email notifications, visit www.triviewnds.com. The link can also be found at www.triviewmetro.com.

Pueblo County permitting

McGrady said the second Pueblo County 1041 permit is proceeding, and the district hopes to present the plan to the Pueblo Board of County Commissioners on June 27. The 1041 planning process is time consuming, but permissions are necessary to operate the district assets in Pueblo County. The first 1041 with Pueblo County was approved in August 2022, allowing the district to store 999 acre-feet of water in Pueblo Reservoir and interface and access the Southern Delivery System. The second 1041 permit will allow operations at the Stonewall Springs South Reservoir and Central Reservoir and will include exchanges to Pueblo and exchanges from Fountain Creek to Pueblo, all steps critical for the NDS operation.

Pump station completed

McGrady said the pump station at the South Reservoir is completed and ready to pump. The massive pump station could, if necessary, move 30 cubic feet of water per second, about 60-acre feet (or 18 million gallons) per day, and tentatively could empty the reservoir in about 20-30 days. The first water was pumped successfully into the South Reservoir on May 12 at 10:45 a.m., a momentous day for the district, he said.

**Northern Monument Creek
Interceptor project**

McGrady said the district had not received any updates from CSU on the Northern Monument Creek Interceptor (NMCI) pipeline project (a large sewer pipe to transport waste 10 miles south to the J.D. Phillips Water Resource Recovery Facility). To determine the feasibility of the project, CSU will hire a consulting agency to complete 30% of the design for the NMCI pipeline. The project has been discussed for five years and included a lengthy National Environmental Policy Act process because the pipeline path would cross the Air Force Academy, he said.

District funding

Melville said the board should anticipate dropping the mill levy again due to the significantly higher property tax value assessment increase for next year. The district reduced the mill levy over the past four years.

McGrady said the previous two-year snapshot is significantly different from the next two-year snapshot. In June 2022 interest rates were about 3% and home prices were going through the roof. The next two-year snapshot from July 2022 through June 2024 will be significantly different with higher interest rates. The district assesses the mill levy at 24 mills solely to pay down the debt service.

Sexton said residents received a reduction of taxes in the district from 35 mills to 24 mills. The revenue from property taxes the district receives has increased with the significant rise of home values. The district taxpayers approved the flexibility to change the mill levy rate should sales taxes dry up in the future, but the district collects what it needs. Some of the loans the district carries cannot be pre-paid, and double payments are prohibited, he said.

Barnhart said the board decision to spread the cost of the debt service loans over 30 years with low interest rates is a benefit. Future residents will also pay for the infrastructure of the district, he said.

McGrady said the district is one of the best financed districts, with a utility enterprise, sales tax, property taxes, tap fees, and an operations and management mill levy that can be assessed if necessary. The money has been expended to the betterment of the community, he said.

Sexton said the district is in a great situation, and if homes are built in TMD, they will have water. The district has enough for buildout with the wells turned off.

Water Attorney Chris Cummins of Monson Cummins & Shotel LLC said the wells on paper are three times buildout, but in the future, extraction will not be economical, and that is the reason the district pursued renewable water rights. Well water will only be used to supplement summer demand in the future, and the district will cease to pump at high demand year-round from the wells, he said.

Conexus dissolution request

McGrady said Conexus had proposed the board dissolve Sub-district B, which overlays the Conexus Metropolitan District 1 and 2. The district relates to the early development days of Conexus when the district implemented two districts: Sub-district A associated with the Conexus development on the east side of I-25 (Jackson Creek North) and Sub-district B on the west side of I-25 (east of the Santa Fe Trail/south of Second Street, Monument). The developers originally thought they would need a funding source, and be-

cause the district dropped the mill levy from 35 mills to 24 mills, creating a gap of 11 mills between what the district is entitled to levy and what it does; Conexus could then issue 11 mills of debt in Sub-district B. The debt would not have been associated with existing TMD residents, only the Conexus property owners. At the time Conexus was planning on developing commercial property in Sub-district B, but the plan has changed to residential. The plan no longer works for Sub-district B after Conexus created a special district independent of TMD with an overlapping service plan for water and infrastructure from TMD. Conexus pledged it would not compete and take away water sales. Conexus will levy its residents 11 mills, and TMD will continue to levy 24 mills for Conexus Sub-district B.

The board tabled the request for further discussion in executive session.

Cummins said the TMD board directors are the controlling board for Sub-district B; and Conexus petitioned the board to create the district, and are requesting the board dissolve the district.

Unexplained water loss

Sexton asked about a discrepancy in the water drawn and sold numbers that had tightened for the last couple of months, but the May numbers showed the district sold 12 million gallons and pulled 15 million, and about 2.5 million gallons was missing.

McGrady said that the discrepancy only shows annually in the summer, and it could be due to some residential meters not turning fast enough. The district has about 300 old meters left to replace with accurate cellular meters in homes, so readings should become tighter. Everything is metered even down to the construction lines including hydrants, and the district is trying to discover the cause. Every irrigation system is metered, regulators were installed, and all meters were calibrated about a year ago. It is a mystery, but likely the loss occurs on the commercial side when irrigation begins, and the district will investigate, he said.

Melville suggested the problem might be meters showing slightly more water than actual production.

Superintendent Shawn Sexton said water is metered at the well, at the plant filter, and when leaving the plant so the loss of water is likely occurring after it exits the plant. There is a 2%-5% variance, but all meters are jibing with each other so the loss is occurring elsewhere, he said.

Sexton said a loss of 15%-22% of water will need to be captured before water is metered from CSU to ensure the district is not capped due to metering issues, leaving the district pumping well water again.

Assistant District Manager Steve Sheffield said that 8%-10% loss acceptable and goes on in all water districts.

McGrady said the problem is concerning, and the whole system could be leak protected, but the loss could be an unmetered irrigation system, or maybe one of the three interconnects with neighboring developments. An irrigation leak is a lot of water that would be visible, he said.

Superintendent Sexton said he would examine the interconnects.

Executive session

The board moved into executive session at 7:55 p.m., pursuant to Colorado Revised Statute 24-6-402(4) (a), (b) and (e), to discuss negotiations regarding water and property acquisitions and receive legal advice for the Upper Monument Creek Waste Water Regional Treatment Facility and the Conexus sub-district dissolution.

Sheffield confirmed that no decisions were made when the board returned to the regular session.

The meeting adjourned at 9:17 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 June 15 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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El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority, May 18

Water quality tests look promising

By James Howald

The El Paso County Loop Regional Water Authority (EPCRLWA) board heard more detailed results of water quality testing at its May 18 meeting. President Jessie Shaffer updated the board on progress filling the project manager position the authority has advertised. Kevin Brown asked the board for direction on how to specify the schematic engineering design report for the project. Director Amy Lathen raised the issue of how to increase political support for the project.

The EPCRLWA was formed in November 2022 by an Intergovernmental Agreement between Cherokee Metropolitan District (CMD), Donala Water and Sanitation District (DWSD), the Town of Monument (TOM), and Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) to build infrastructure that would allow water, including treated effluent, that is flowing south in Monument and Fountain Creeks to be stored at Calhan Reservoir at Woodmoor Ranch and then pumped back north to be used by customers of the participating districts.

Few concerns with water quality

Richard Hood, of JVA Inc., the company the authority has hired to assess water quality and design the water treatment aspects of the project, summarized for the board a memo he wrote detailing the water quality results from testing done in March and April. Hood said the overall water quality is good, making the water relatively easy to treat. Tests showed the water quality was consistent, he said, with moderate pH and alkalinity levels. The tests showed moderate dissolved carbon and acceptable levels of iron and manganese. Total dissolved solids—a measure of minerals, salts, and metals—were slightly above the standard, Hood

said.

Hood said standards for per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances, commonly called PFAS, were announced by the Environmental Protection Agency in March but are not yet in effect. The standards are expected to be enforced in December 2026. Hood told the board these substances, which don’t break down over time and are linked to a wide range of health problems, should be watched carefully and will impact the design of the water treatment part of the project. Hood said the tests showed perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) levels at 9.5 parts per trillion. The target level is 4 parts per trillion. The tests for perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS) showed levels at 16 parts per trillion. The target level is 4 parts per trillion.

Hood said the first samples were taken at the headgate of the Chilcott Ditch, the point at which the water is diverted from Fountain Creek. The next round will be drawn from where the Chilcott Ditch enters the Calhan Reservoir. This will provide a measure of changes that may be occurring as the water is conveyed through the ditch.

Project manager position generates interest

Shaffer told the board that the request for proposal for a project manager who will coordinate the work of the consultants and contractors needed for the project has seen many downloads from the BidNet site where it is posted, indicating lots of interest.

Direction sought on design proposal

Kevin Brown, an employee of CMD who is responsible for an RFP to develop a schematic engineering design report for the complete infrastructure required by the project, asked the board for direction on the question

of who should make the final decisions on technical issues—the project manager that the board intends to hire or the board members themselves.

The schematic engineering design report is a detailed plan that will address issues such as the water treatment design, the location of pumping stations, the specifications for the several runs of pipeline that will need to be built, and so forth. The report will also document exactly which portions of the infrastructure each participating district will own and is needed to inform financial decisions. The EPCRLWA board plans to hire a consulting company to complete this report.

Brown recommended these decisions be made by the board members but felt either approach could work. The issue remained undecided.

Board will reach out to Mobolade

Director Amy Lathen, who represents CMD on the EPCRLWA board, suggested the board should reach out to Yemi Mobolade, the recently elected mayor of Colorado Springs. Director Mike Foreman, who represents TOM on the EPCRLWA board, said a meeting with Mobolade was already scheduled and agreed that the authority needs to increase its political representation.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for June 15 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 every Thursday at 9 a.m. at rotating venues. Please see loopwater.org or call 719-488-3603 to verify meeting times and locations.

JamesHowaldcanbereachedatjameshowald@ocn.me.

Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Organizations (NEPCO)

Wildfires drive up insurance costs in county

By Dave Betzler

The good news is that Colorado has earned another top three recognition. The not-so-great news is that this somewhat smoke-obscured national ranking is for Colorado’s wildfire risk. May was Wildfire Awareness month, providing an opportunity to look at wildfire risks and rising insurance costs facing individual homeowners. The recent catastrophic East Troublesome and Marshall/Boulder wildfires sharply, and in some case painfully, highlighted the dynamics of property insurance, a Rubik’s cube of wildfire risk, rebuilding costs, premiums, and regulatory changes.

Colorado is third nationally for properties in areas of high or extreme risk, and over 40 percent of Colorado’s nearly 6 million people live within the wildland urban interface (WUI). By definition, the WUI is the line, area, or zone where man-made structures and development intersect with undeveloped lands and vegetative fuels. In a two-state—Colorado and New Mexico—risk study, El Paso County was “particularly concerning” for properties at risk of wildfire damage.

Homeowners across northern El Paso County face twin challenges of insurance availability and affordability, and overcoming these challenges will not be easy, quick, or inexpensive. Area homeowners as well as those moving to Colorado face annual insurance costs that are roughly 30% higher than the national average, with 2021 reflecting insurance premiums that were up an average of 12%.

The all-too-common reality for consumers is fewer insurance carriers, limited policy choices, and continuing premium spikes. Nationally, tornadoes and hurricanes account for almost 90% of all losses, with wind/hail accounting for 5.4%, followed by cata-

strophic fires for 1.5%. Louisiana, Florida, and Texas, followed by Colorado, are the highest-cost states for property insurance. At the state level, more than 75% of insurance carrier groups have written fewer policies, and in Darwinian fashion, large firms are absorbing the small.

In a turbulent and dynamic insurance market, the desired homeowner goal of stable policies and reasonable premiums can often appear like a distant mirage. In Colorado, consumers do have an insurance watchdog and advocate. Vince Plymell, a senior Division of Insurance official, noted that investigation of consumer complaints following the East Troublesome and Marshall fires recovered \$19.6 million for consumers, a 93% increase in dollar recovery over the previous year.

In Colorado, property and casualty insurers are governed by regulations and guided by administrative agencies, with oversight by the state Legislature. Legislators are increasingly concerned with today’s dynamic insurance environment of rising costs and limited policy choices and the downstream effect on homeowners. The Legislature developed Senate Bill 22-213, which called for creation of a wildfire urban interface Code Board to oversee statewide wildfire-related buildings and land-use standards. SB 23-213 included language for statewide regulation and enforcement of land use, a particularly concerning clause for homeowners associations and their members. The 2023 Colorado legislative session ended May 8 with SB 23-213 failing to pass after legislators were unable to reach a compromise between the Senate and House versions.

Most states have some type of minimum coverage or insurance-of-last-resort as a safety net for ho-

meowners. Fair Access to Insurance Requirements (FAIR) plans were created as a response to insurance market unavailability that occurred when insurers stopped providing coverage to high-risk properties and individuals in specific geographic areas. These state-mandated FAIR plans create an insurance pool funded by the insurance companies to provide coverage to individuals and businesses who are unable to obtain insurance in the regular market. In essence, FAIR plans function as a quasi-governmental insurer for homeowners unable to secure a regular insurance policy. This session, Colorado legislators proposed a FAIR plan that, if enacted, would function as insurer-of-last-resort for homeowners and businesses.

Colorado’s heightened and growing wildfire risk, coupled with a more stringent insurance market conditions, limit consumer options and add more difficulty for the individual insurance decision maker. A statewide independent poll in 2015 found that 96% of Coloradans said that it’s very important or pretty important for homeowners to undertake fire mitigation. Monument Fire District has a no-cost risk assessment program that gives homeowners important steps to reduce the wildfire risk, and NEPCO’s (Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Organizations) Wildfire Preparedness Committee provides practical tips to ensure safety and survivability for those living in the wildland urban interface.

NEPCO meetings are usually held on the second Saturday of every other month at the Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr., 10 a.m. to noon. The next meeting is July 15. The topic is water issues. All members of HOAs are welcome. For more information, see <http://nepco.org>.

Woodmoor Improvement Association, May 24

Board hears about new regulation regarding vegetable gardens

By Jackie Burhans

At its April meeting, the Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) board heard an update from the Northern El Paso Coalition of Community Organizations (NEPCO) meeting regarding legislation around homeowner association (HOA) rules for vegetable gardens. It also heard residents’ concerns about trashcans and email communication and heard director reports.

HOA legislation on vegetable gardens

HOA Administrator Denise Cagliaro attended the May meeting of NEPCO in Director Rick DePaiva’s stead. She reported that the state Legislature passed a bill requiring HOAs to allow vegetable gardens in the side and front yards of homes. WIA must pick three designs that are pre-approved and post them on its website. Cagliaro clarified that the rule does not cover greenhouses. The Architectural Control Committee

(ACC) is working on developing the approved designs and taking into consideration the need for deer fencing, said ACC Administrator Bob Pearsall.

The legislation in question is SB23-0178, Water-wise Landscaping in Homeowners’ Associate Communities. It reiterates current regulation that allows for non-vegetative turf in backyards, hardscape in a portion of the landscaping area, 80% drought-tolerant plantings, and vegetable gardens in the front, back, or

side yard of an owner’s property. The bill requires an HOA to permit three pre-approved garden designs that adhere to principles of water-wise landscaping or be part of a water conservation program operated by a local water provider. For more information, see <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb23-178>.

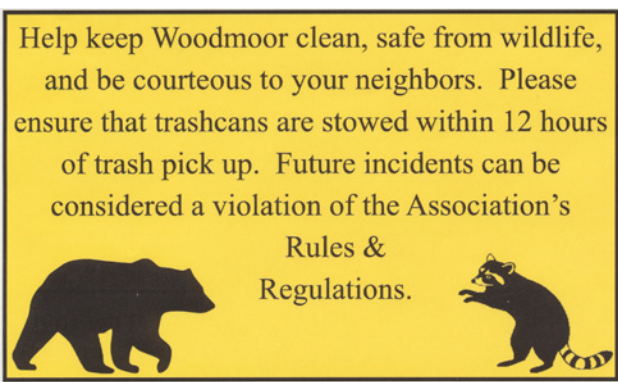
Resident concerns

Two residents spoke at the board meeting. One of them noted that there were several neighbors leaving their trashcans out after their trash had been picked up and asked if there weren’t something that could be done. President Brian Bush, for whom this is a pet peeve, noted that WIA has stickers they can place on trashcans reminding them to take them in. Bush noted that residents could report such incidents to covenant enforcement or Woodmoor Public Safety (WPS), and they will treat it as a covenant violation.

Another resident asked if WIA had fixed its email problem. Vice President Peter Bille said it had not, but WIA was looking to switch providers. The resident said she could provide a referral to her provider, and Bush suggested she send it to Cagliaro and Bille, but not via email.

Board highlights

- Treasurer Connie Brown noted that there will still be 100 unpaid accounts and that WIA would file 56 liens before June 1, noting this was a very small percentage of property owners. Bush noted that it was more expensive to pay liens than to pay the annual dues.
- Brown commended the staff for holding down



Above: Woodmoor Public Safety stickers may be placed on residents’ trash cans if they are left out after trash pickup has occurred. The issue of trash is covered in Article IV on Covenant Maintenance Assessments, Section 11 on Refuse and Rubbish. See more on the WIA covenants at <https://woodmoor.org/governance/>. Courtesy WIA.

- expenses.
- Director of Covenants Per Suhr said there were 13 covenant-related items in April and that WIA preferred to handle issues with phone calls or friendly letters. There were no covenant hearings in May, nor did he anticipate one in June. Suhr commended Covenants Administrator Justin Gates, saying he has done a tremendous job, noting that in the past, there had been meetings every month with many residents.

- Director of Architectural Control Ed Miller reported 47 submitted projects in April; 37 were approved by Pearsall and 10 were approved by the ACC. Year to date, 138 projects have been submitted, 31.3% fewer than in 2022, Miller said. The approval rate is 99.2%.
- Cagliaro reported on behalf of Director of Forestry Cindy Thrush that there were seven Fire-wise grant visits and that WIA had just been notified by the state of an additional \$30,000 in grant money.
- Chipping days are scheduled at Lewis-Palmer High School on June 10 and 11, as well as on July 29 and 30. This service is free to Woodmoor residents.
- The board unanimously approved a \$1,000 deposit and budget not to exceed \$39,000 to acquire a new Toyota RAV 4 hybrid to be received sometime in July. Public Safety Director Brad Gleason noted that WPS is transitioning away from Jeeps due to maintenance issues.

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 will be on June 28.

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.

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

May Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

Near record monthly precipitation occurred during May with total precipitation exceeding 5 inches for all of us and some areas receiving nearly 10 inches. This was the wettest May since 2015. Unlike that year, almost everything fell as rainfall this month, with just a little snow on the Palmer Divide. This was a different story up in the mountains and shows how important just a few hundred feet of elevation difference can be this time of the year between snow and rain.

All the moisture and clouds kept high temperatures relatively cool. Conversely, the excess moisture kept overnight low temperatures relatively mild. This meant overall temperatures were normal for the month. Another interesting aspect of the weather during May was that several days had a good amount of smoke in the air. This wasn’t from any fires in Colorado, but instead was drawn into the region from the numerous fires burning well to our north in Alberta, Canada. This was the result of a very unusual pattern where a strong ridge of high pressure was present in the Pacific Northwest, with a strong low pressure over the Rockies and upper Midwest and another high pressure over the eastern U.S. This blocked the flow and allowed the smoke to get pulled in low over the Rockies and brought into the Front Range of Colorado.

Weather was quiet and relatively dry during two periods, the first week of the month and the last week of the month. Between these two periods most days received rainfall, sometimes heavy. Most days saw the typical late spring weather pattern with quiet weather in the morning, then building into cumulus clouds by late morning and early afternoon. These would then

continue to build into thunderstorms that moved generally west to east and produce an hour or so of rainfall. This type of storm pattern results in variable rainfall accumulation amounts depending on whether a given storm moved over your neighborhood or not.

The strongest storm of the month moved through the region from the 9th through the 12th. This storm moved on the West Coast then into our region and strengthened significantly, producing widespread heavy rain and heavy snow in the higher elevations. Ahead of this storm, southwesterly winds produced our warmest temperatures of the month, with upper 70s on the afternoon of the 9th. The next morning, we woke up to low clouds and a very moist air mass. Then the initial thunderstorms associated with this system formed early in the afternoon. This included severe storms and a few tornadoes just to our north and east. The next round of thunderstorms developed around 4 p.m. that afternoon and produced heavy rain and hail.

As this storm continued to intensify, it stalled out to our south and transitioned from a convective event to produce clouds and steady rainfall. Cooler air also moved in, dropping snow levels. Heavy rainfall continued that evening and into the 11th. Temperatures dropped just enough on the morning of the 11th to produce some measurable snow between 8-10 a.m. over the higher elevations of the Palmer Divide. Snow levels then rose just enough to keep us in rain the rest of the day while at the same time producing heavy snow along the Rampart Range and into Teller County.

The storm continued to produce rainfall and cool

temperatures through the next morning. By the time the storm was done, we had received 4-8 inches of rainfall, which produced some flooding in low-lying areas and along I-25. The other unusual aspect of this storm was the nearly continuous rainfall for almost the entire period.

A look ahead

By June we can usually say goodbye to our chance of snowfall but hello to frequent afternoon and evening thunderstorms. Most of the time we can expect warm, sunny days with afternoon and evening thunderstorms.

May 2023 Weather Statistics

Average High	65.0° (-0.7°)
100-year return frequency value max	75.7° min 57.9°
Average Low	39.4° (+0.5°)
100-year return frequency value max	43.2° min 32.5°
Highest Temperature	77°F on the 9th
Lowest Temperature	31°F on the 1st, 6th
Monthly Precipitation	5.91"
	(+3.27" 200% above normal)
100-year return frequency value max	6.94" min 0.15"
Monthly Snowfall	0.5"
	(-5.2" 91% below normal)
Season to Date Snow	71.6"
	(-50.8" 42% below normal)
	(the snow season is from July 1 to June 30)
Season to Date Precip	10.38"
	(+1.54" 15% above normal)
	(the precip season is from July 1 to June 30)
Heating Degree Days	398 (+80)
Cooling Degree Days	0
Bill Kappel is a meteorologist and Tri-Lakes resident. He can be reached at billkappel@ocn.me .	

Letters to Our Community

Guidelines for letters are on page 31. Disclaimer: The information and opinions expressed in LetterstoOurCommunityaretheresponsibilityoftheletter writers and should not be interpreted as the views of OCN even if the letter writer is an OCN volunteer. The letters are in order by the author's last name.

More demonstrable lies from D38

While you’re looking at your exploding tax bill, take a few minutes to think about the additional taxes District 38 wanted you to have to pay on top of what your new tax bill has become. Last year, they put a 7.45-mill increase on the ballot. They claimed they needed the \$5.5 million for teacher salaries and that it would have only raised taxes for the average house by \$260.

That was never the real amount because the average house here costs closer to \$800,000 not the \$500,000 they claimed. If you doubt that, just look at your new tax bill with the updated property value assessment. If their “ask” had passed, your high tax bill would probably be at least \$500 higher right now. And

they would have hustled taxpayers out of \$8 million, not \$5.5 million as advertised.

That’s because, unlike the flat-rate, \$4 million/year MLO passed in 1999, an increase of 7.45 mills increases with home values. D38 deliberately used outdated values to advertise lower dollar amounts in their campaign. Anyone who checked real estate listings would have seen this. Thankfully, enough people had the sense to vote No.

But D38 is at it again this year, hoping fewer No voters will bother to mail back ballots. They’re still repeating another favorite lie—that teachers are leaving to go work in other districts who offer higher pay.

How do we know it’s a lie? D38’s own employee termination reports from 2018 to 2020 list only two or three “Not satisfied with position/pay” exits each year (out of an average of 62 resignations annually). Not one left for pay in 2019. When I complained that their own reports prove that teachers aren’t running to neighboring districts for higher pay, they didn’t apologize. They just stopped producing the report.

Vote, and vote no.
Derek Araje/#JustAskDerek

LPHS After Prom thanks

Thanks to our great community of parents, Lewis-Palmer High School staff, and students, After Prom 2023 was a huge success! We had approximately 430 students attend the event.

Many school districts do not offer an After Prom, as the planning and coordination involved take a substantial amount of parent involvement and resources. District 38 high schools have a dedicated group of staff, parents, and community supporters which allows us to make After Prom a yearly tradition!

Much of the financial support comes from local businesses and many families’ personal donations. We would like to recognize the following community supporters: Tri-Lakes Printing, Ellie Mental Health, Something New Boutique, Arlene’s Beans, Chick-fil-A, Horseshoe Donuts, Top Golf, The Summit, Target, Scheels, Overdrive Raceway, Glow Golf, Parry’s Pizza,

Mod Pizza, City Rock, Lolley's, Freedom Car Wash, Black Forest Deli, Legends Mini Golf & Batting, Pies & Grinders, In-N-Out, Bad Daddy's Burgers, Texas Roadhouse, Costa Vida, Burger King, Buffalo Wild Wings, Chipotle, World Arena, Whataburger, Vibes, The Edge Zipline, Snarf's, Red Robin, Qdoba, PF Chang, Nothing Bundt Cakes, IHOP, I Fly, Freedom Car Wash, Freddy's, Elitch, Denver Zoo, Crumble Cookie, Canes, Fuzzy's, Hamula Orthodontics, Taco Bell, Torchy's, and Wendy's.



LPHS After Prom photo provided by Michelle Oliger

We had over 100 volunteers who helped with purchasing prizes, organizing food, selling tickets, decorating, working on the night of the event, and cleaning up the day after, and so much more.

A very special thank you goes to Angie Ivall, Jenn Clinard, Dyann Wenckus, Liz and Chris Scott, Laurie Devine, Julie Hart, Nicole Pritchard, Liz Meggett, Coach Tupper, and Bridget O'Connor (principal). Michelle Oliger
After Prom Chair

No Mafia in Monument

Through an open-record request to the Town of Monument, it was discovered that the town illegally engaged in electioneering with taxpayer dollars to promote passing the Town Charter. Fearing if voters found out about this illegal activity, they might potentially lose, the town manager and most on the Charter commission hid the illegal activity from the voters until after the election. Some engaged in this illegal activity are now, as of January 2023, your Monument Council.

The outgoing trustees called for a legitimate investigation into how and why taxpayer dollars were

used illegally, but these newly elected corrupt politicians didn't want you to know the results. They went to great lengths to try sabotaging the investigation, and the reporting of its findings. The town attorney wrote a laughable "report" to try to justify what was discovered. Thinking you can simply vote to bury a report and its evidence of corruption in order to "go away" is something the Mafia does.

On top of illegal electioneering, and only under pressure of an open records request, you, the taxpayers, are going to pick up the tab for the mayor's personal attorney fees over \$21,000. The personal attorney was hired to protect the mayor during the electioneering investigation, which uncovered, among other things, an inappropriate sexual comment made by the mayor toward another trustee.

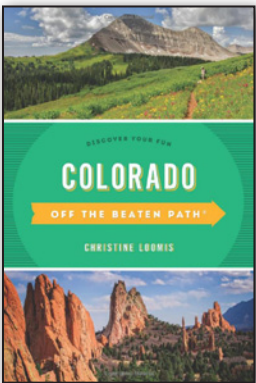
The taxpayers should never be paying for an elected official's legal counsel for inappropriate behavior. Shouldn't our tax dollars be put toward better use, such as fixing the numerous potholes between LPHS and YMCA that would benefit our citizens? Lack of transparency and excusing bad behavior by this Town Council is not in the best interest of Monument citizens. Not now, not ever.
Amy Stephens

Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

Explore nature and the outdoors Explore nature and the outdoors

By the staff at Covered Treasures
"Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better."—Albert Einstein
This is a glorious time to get outside in Colorado. Here's a sampling of books to learn more about plants, wildlife, and getting outside.

Colorado Off the Beaten Path: Discover Your Fun
By Christine Loomis (Globe Pequot Press) \$17.95
This new, updated 13th edition by local author Christine Loomis is an essential source of information about the sights and sites travelers and locals want to see and experience. From the best in local dining to quirky cultural tidbits to hidden attractions, unique finds, and unusual locales, this guide takes the reader down the road less traveled.



How to Read the Wilderness: An Illustrated Guide to the Natural Wonders of North America
By Nature Study Guild (Chronicle) \$35
From the mountains to the ocean shores, from the wetlands to the deserts, North America teems with flora and fauna. With this book in hand, you will understand the language of nature and see those wild places with new eyes. For more than 60 years, these Guild guidebooks have helped hikers, campers, foragers, and explorers navigate the great outdoors. Now, the best of the guides' informative text and iconic illustrations are gathered in one book, the perfect reference for today's rambblers.

Wildlife Anatomy: The Curious Lives & Features of Wild Animals Around the World
By Julia Rothman (Storey Publishing) \$18.99
Bestselling author/illustrator Julia Rothman shares a delightfully illustrated guide to all the beasts of the wild, from lions, tigers, and bears to elephants, giraffes, foxes, owls, and much more. This guide covers all the key features, right down to the anatomy of a lion's claw and a wild horse's hoof. All the illustrations are accompanied by labels, intriguing facts, and identifying details, such as: When is a Panther not a panther?

The Secret World of Weather: How to Read Signs in Every Cloud, Breeze, Hill, Street, Plant, Animal, and Dewdrop
By Tristan Gooley (Experiment) \$17.95
Learn to "see" the forecast in the hidden weather signs all around you in this eye-opening trove of outdoor clues. Acclaimed natural navigator Tristan Gooley shows us how, by reading nature as he does, you'll not only detect what the weather is doing (and predict what's coming), you'll enter a secret wonderland of sights and sounds you've never noticed before. Discover the ways that weather can reveal a hidden world with every step you take—through the woods or down a city street.

Sounds Wild and Broken: Sonic Marvels, Evolution's Creativity, and the Crisis of Sensory Extinction
By David George Haskell (Penguin) \$18
We live on a planet alive with song, music, and speech. David Haskell explores how these wonders came to be. Starting with the origins of animal song and traversing the whole arc of Earth history, Haskell illuminates and celebrates the emergence of the varied sounds of our world. This book is an invitation to listen, wonder, belong, and act.

100 Plants to Feed the Monarch: Create a Healthy Habitat to Sustain North America's Most Beloved Butterfly
By The Xerces Society (Storey Publishing) \$16.95
The plight of the monarch butterfly has captured public attention and sparked widespread interest in helping save their dwindling populations. In this in-depth portrait of the monarch butterfly, detailed instructions on how to design and create monarch-friendly landscapes are enriched by guidance on butterfly behavior and habits. You will find profiles of plant species that provide nourishment, including those that bloom in late season and sustain monarchs on their great migration. Gorgeous photographs of monarchs and plants, plus illustrations, maps, and garden plans, make this a visually engaging guide.

437 Edible Wild Plants of the Rocky Mountain West: Berries, Roots, Nuts, Greens, Flowers, and Seeds
By Caleb Warnock (Familius) \$27.99
This thorough field guide documents 437 edible wild plants for Colorado, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Utah, Arizona, Nevada, and New Mexico. Self-sufficiency expert Caleb Warnock brings the ultimate guidebook to living off the land, including a section on poisonous plants to avoid. Packed with over 1,450 photographs and invaluable information on plant identification, flavor, seasonality, history, common synonyms, eating and preparation instructions, and more, you can have accurate information. Be aware: Much false information on wild edibles has been widely distributed on the internet.

Until next month, happy reading.
The staff at Covered Treasures can be reached at books@ocn.me.

Support Our Community
Advertise in OCN!

Our Community News (OCN), with a circulation over 23,000, 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 area 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.

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

June Library Events

Join us for a Summer Adventure

By Harriet Halbig
It's time again for the Summer Adventure summer learning program. Summer Adventure is open to those up to age 18 and runs from June 1 to July 31 this year.
Come to the library to register on June 1 or later, or register online via the website ppld.org.
Upon registration, each participant receives a free book (those ages 12 to 18 may choose a journal instead). There is a wide selection of titles to choose from.

Download and print a game card from the website and fill in a space for each day spent reading, moving, or doing such imaginative projects as art, crafts, or music.
After 30 days of participation, those up to age 3 will receive a colorful bath toy, those ages 4 to 11 will receive a reading medal, and those ages 12 to 18 can choose a second book or journal.
Please see the website for a schedule of fun programs for all ages throughout the district. These include science programs, music, and art programs. In Monument, the programs will be on Tuesdays at the same time as regular story times.
Adult programs such as book clubs and Socrates Café will continue at their regular schedule during the summer months.
Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me

Support Our Community.
Shop Tri-Lakes and
Black Forest!

Palmer Lake Historical Society, May 18

Authors show ways to find history on hikes

By Marlene Brown

At the May 18 meeting of the Palmer Lake Historical Society, authors Rocky Shockley and T. Duren Jones presented a lively PowerPoint on the book *Easy Hikes to the Hidden Past*. Their book describes many hikes in the Pikes Peak Region, including along the Palmer Divide, the Monument Preserve, and Palmer Lake area. With pictures of relics (junk of the past), there are many interesting points along the way.

Mount Herman, also known as Monument Preserve, has remnants of a Bureau of Forests Planting Station Tree Nursery. Millions of seeds were collected from pinecones and planted in beds. Rows of seedlings were established and shipped all over the Pikes Peak Region. The nursery was abandoned during World War II and rows of young pine trees were left to grow on their own (page 155, *Easy Hikes of the Hidden Past*).

Palmer Lake sports many historical hikes, including Palmer Lake Trail, New Santa Fe Regional Trail, and Santa Fe Open Space. Santa Fe Open space, recently opened by El Paso County, has many ranch relics along the trail, a 2-mile loop at the base of Ben

Lomand Mountain and Elephant Rock (www.elpaso-co.com/el-paso-county-parks-open-santa-fe-open-space).

Continuing on the trail and looking for relics or “junk” on the sides of many worn roads and you will find the past. If you look hard enough, you can imagine the settlers that came and carved out history in stone or metal. You can find old car bodies from the 20s, 30s, 40s and so on. You can find stairs to nowhere and fire chimneys with no house attached. There is whole world out there when you take *Easy Hikes to the Hidden Past*. The book is available at Covered Treasures in Monument and other booksellers online.

Next month, the Palmer Lake Historical Society meeting will be the annual Father’s Day Ice Cream Social held at the Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent St., on June 18, from 2 to 4 p.m. Rain or shine, the event is free and open to the public. Bring your lawn chairs and enjoy free pie and ice cream with music by Craig Walter. The event is sponsored by John Spidell of The Spidell Foundation.

For more information regarding the society’s



Above: The Palmer Lake Historical Society meeting May 18 featured the book *Easy Hikes to the Hidden Past*. Pictured are authors Rocky Shockley, left, and T. Duren Jones. *Photo by Marlene Brown.*

monthly historical talks and field trips, go to its website <http://palmerdividehistory.org>.
Marlene Brown can be contacted at marlenebrown@ocn.me.

On the Trail (in memory of Tim Watkins)

Storms damage trails and roads, fill reservoirs

By Steve Pate

With the recent torrential rains, many local trails have been damaged. After being closed briefly for storm damage repairs, the Palmer Lake reservoir road was reopened and is passable for hikers and mountain bikers. Both Palmer Lake reservoirs are full.

On a hike around the Ice Cave Creek Trail (ICCT) loop on May 26, I found the ICCT in great shape. Ice Cave Creek is running strong, and one might get their feet wet hiking the two crossings on ICCT and Swank trails. Rains have caused erosion on Swank trail, especially just south of Ice Cave Creek with water running down the eroded center of the trail.

Road damage has restricted access to Mount Herman via Mount Herman Road. According to reliable reports, most of the trails around Mount Herman, Raspberry, and Limbaugh Canyon are passable for hikers and bikers, but please do not attempt to drive up Mount Herman Road to the trailhead, FS 716. The U.S Forest Service closed the road to vehicles. Those who hike regularly in the area know that someone opened the gate and drove their 4 Runner up Mount Herman Road into a washed-out ditch.

With spring rains, the area’s trails are beautiful and greening up. Even the “devastated” wildfire mitigation areas are showing signs of renewal.

Steve Pate can be contacted at stevepate@ocn.me.

Photos by Steve Pate taken May 26



Above: Ice Cave Creek crossing Swank Trail.
Below: Mount Herman Road closure.



Above: Upper Palmer Lake reservoir.
Below: Lower Palmer Lake reservoir.



High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

Very good plants, harmful invaders

By Janet Sellers

Is June too late to plant summer flowers and crops in our area? With moisture from heavy May rains and hot dry summers, we can still plant some greens easily in pots or in the ground, planning waterings to protect against moisture loss.

We started kale, lettuces, and sunflowers at the Tri-Lakes Cares food garden in late May, and they sprouted in four days! If bought for transplanting, fruiting plants (peppers, tomatoes, eggplant, etc.) that should’ve been in the ground by now will provide summer and fall harvests. Choose fast-growing seeds of beans, beets, and squash for late summer crops—even everbearing strawberries could offer fruit this year.

Flowers that grow well in our area include cosmos, bachelor buttons, marigolds, sunflowers, and zinnias, and they will all sprout and grow easily from June planting. Some of the issues in the last few years for our local victory gardens include late snows/frosts and invaders: gophers, voles, moles, and deer. We live in a clime perfect for wildlife, and they are here. Gardens are nice for us, but easy pickings for the varmints, too. What to do?

Castor oil mixed with plain clay cat litter and

broadcasted protects lawns. Also successful in keeping critters away is scattering this for a 2-foot border outside the flower or food beds. We know that pet cats and feral “community” cats are effective to keep critters out of the garden. Many farmers and homesteaders add diatomaceous earth to farm animal and cat food to protect them from possible parasites.

Protect your pets and kids

The rain helped a lot of plants get started, including weeds. We have some noxious weeds to look out for and remove, usually just pulling them with gloved hands is enough. We see the harmful, invasive spotted knapweed (a bushy plant of tiny, scraggly, pink or white thistlelike flowers); spurge (greenish-yellow flowerlike bracts of seeds), and the butter-n-eggs (which look a little bit like tiny snapdragons) are about a foot tall in June on roadsides, landscape edges, etc. The spurge latex sap seriously irritates the skin of people and animals and can cause human blindness upon eye contact.

Janet Sellers is an avid “lazy” gardener, letting Mother Nature’s wisdom lead the way to gardening in the high desert Rocky Mountain clime. Contact her at JanetSellers@ocn.me



Left: Avoid local spurge plants that are emerging now, often found at or near roadsides, in our landscapes, and in common areas. The plant’s white, latex sap causes serious irritation symptoms, including severe skin and eye itching. The National Capital Poison Control Center (www.poison.org) reports that leafy spurge contains the alkaloid euphorbia, which is toxic to humans and animals and is a known co-carcinogen. These plants are most effectively removed by hand, but wear gloves (and wash them afterward!), long sleeves, pants, and boots. These should be pulled out all the way to the creeping roots and disposed of properly. We are all required by law to remove noxious weeds from any place on or even near our property. *Photo by Janet Sellers.*

Art Matters

Art spaces for our creative spirit



By Janet Sellers

A new creative venue is in the historic 1880 building, the original Monument post office. Located at the corner of Second and Washington Streets, El Santo Vaquero is an art gallery with decor, handicrafts, and apparel imbued with Southern and Mexican influences and local Colorado artists and artisans' works from around the world.

The grand opening will be on June 3, starting at 10 a.m., with new one-of-a-kind items. Artist signings, demos, maker meet and greets, food trucks, and more will be present to introduce the "unique faith-based space honoring the creative spirit in all of us."

The venue is surrounded by gardens and water features. Christian Kurz, of Italian and Mexican heritage, said she looks to fill the patio and garden with bright flowers reminiscent of Mexico. She has hired an ethnic artisan to create huge wooden wing wall sculptures for the outside of the build-

ing near the west wall entrance. It will be fun to take "angel photos" there. Artisans will be creating artwork in the courtyard, and Kurz is looking to have musicians play, too. All the artworks, pottery, decor, and events will be in keeping with unique, joyful, and faith-based themes.

Recently in May for Mother's Day, Kurz offered complimentary desserts and giveaways, inviting people to bring their mother or "a mother you love" to enjoy and share with everyone "what makes your mother or mother nominee" one of a kind.

At the June Art Hop, founder Kurz will be celebrating the release and author signing of her book *The Spiritual Archetypes*. The book was initially created as a quiz titled What is your spiritual archetype? She offered correlating guidebooks, and it captivated audiences and has been downloaded over 1 million times worldwide since it was released. Kurtz designed all the art-



Above: Christian Kurz of El Santo Vaquero has created a sacred space to "gather, shop, and experience the beauty of faith through the creative Spirit." The new space will offer creative spirit-inspired events, artworks, handicrafts, decor, adornments, and space for Kurz's classes and workshops at 213 Washington St., Monument. *Photo by Janet Sellers.*

work for this newest aesthetic creation. The book release and signing on July 20 at 7 p.m. coincides with the July Art Hop at the shop.

Janet Sellers is an artist, writer, and speaker with artworks exhibited in galleries and museums in the Rocky Mountains and on the East and West Coasts. Contact her at: JanetSellers@ocn.me.

Snapshots of Our Community

New girl scout troop



Above: Gleneagle Sertoma created a new scout troop for girls on April 19 that will be linked to Boy Scout Troop 194. Members of Troop 194 Girls will be able to earn merit badges and take on challenges similar to the boys' troop. District executive David Durkee says, "The value of including all siblings and family members in the wonderful world of scouting is tremendous for our community." Eight girls who are sisters of current scouts were the first to enroll. To learn more about Boy Scouts Troop 194 and 194 Girls, visit their website at csscouts.org or on Facebook at Troop 194 Gleneagle. In the photo, Troop 194 Girls are shown learning knot tying. *Photo by Christine Pollard.*

Local goalie's team wins big



Left: Bailey Unruh, a 13-year-old goalie from Lewis-Palmer Middle School, helped her team win the World Selects Invite (WSI) youth hockey world championship on April 29. Bailey is the only Coloradan on the North American Prospects, who defeated Sweden 3-2 in the final contest. The Prospects beat 11 other teams from nine countries to take home the gold. Bailey allowed only one goal in the entire tournament. The WSI is an invitation-only event that provides the top players in the world the opportunity to compete in a world-class hockey competition and cultural experience. *Photo by Eric Unruh.*

Merrick honored for sculpture



Above: On May 1, Jerry Merrick, seated, was honored with a plaque for his iconic elephant rock sculpture in Palmer Lake. A local stone mason by trade, he created the artwork for the historic Camp Elephant Rock site in Palmer Lake in 1972. A group of local Palmer Lake Arts District members and friends joined in the celebration, and he is shown here with his family members. *Photo by Janet Sellers.*

Monument Glamping ribbon-cutting



Above: The Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting at Monument Glamping on May 1. Glamping is glamorous camping. Co-owners Chris and Wendy Jeub were surrounded by several members of their family in red hats and red checkered shirts as the business was officially dedicated. Chris, who's also a volunteer for *Our Community News*, said they got the idea for the business five years ago when he and his wife stayed in a tent in their yard while their house was being renovated. They now have five tents as well as four container homes, a treehouse, and a tiny house available for booking. *Photo by Michael Weinfeld.*

Arbor Day at Monument Lake



Above: Arbor Day was celebrated a month late at Monument Lake on May 5. The original event was postponed from April 28 because of snow. About 20 people attended. They watched as Parks/Facility Superintendent James Schubauer (with rake) demonstrated proper planting techniques for two 7-foot Honey Crisp Apple trees which replaced the 100-year-old apple tree lost during sewer construction. A tiny shoot remains from the original tree. Parks and Trails Planner and Program Manager Cassie Olgren provided additional education about trees and sent the attendees home with free plants. Five Montmorency Cherry trees, another Honey Crisp, and a Haralred Apple were planted earlier after construction was completed. *Photo by Tia M. Mayer.*

Flooding in Monument, May 12



Above: Heavy rain turned Monument Creek into a raging river, caused Monument Lake to overflow its banks, and flooded parts of Jackson Creek Parkway and Old Denver Road last month. The National Weather Service estimates that nearly 6 inches of rain fell in Monument from May 10-12. The town warned residents online and with LED road signs to drive carefully if they came upon standing water. *Photos by Michael Weinfeld.*

Battalion Chief Keough retires



Above: From left, Lt. Chris Keough, retired Battalion Chief Mike Keough, Fire Chief Andy Kovacs, Lt. Franz Hankins, and Monument Fire District (MFD) staff at Station 1 on Highway 105, on May 13. Mike Keough received a full retirement ceremony with the district honor guard and an El Paso County Sheriff's Office Dispatch Center duty sign-off. With shift staff, family, and friends, the ceremony celebrated Keough's retirement after 19 years of service with the district. Keough reminisced about how the department had undergone many changes from the beginning of his service as a Fire Explorer in the late 1990s when MFD had one station and a storage barn with a paid fire chief, an administrative assistant, a paramedic, 15 volunteer firefighters, and 16 Fire Explorers. Keough said he was incredibly proud to have served and developed the district, and the department had come a long way in 25 years, first combining with Woodmoor Fire Department to become Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District, and more recently with Donald Wescott Fire Protection District to become MFD with a joint staff of almost 100. For more information on Fire and EMS Career Exploring, visit www.exploring.org. *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*

Black Forest AARP at Expo



Above: On May 6, 11 members of Black Forest AARP Chapter 1100 took turns staffing a booth at the Senior Life Expo that was attended by over 500 people. The previous day, the Board of Directors met to prepare for a summer of serving the community. Joining board members were chapter officers and several committee and chapter members. They discussed plans for the annual free shredding event on June 10 and the Black Forest Festival on Aug. 12, among other things. The shredding event will be held from 9 to noon at 12455 Black Forest Road in Black Forest. No reservation is needed. *Photo by Stan Beckner.*

LPHS final 2023 concert, May 9



Above: The Jazz Band, Symphonic Band, and Wind Symphony performed their final concert for 2023 on May 9 at Lewis-Palmer High School. Seniors won awards for excellence: The John Philip Sousa Award was won by Nikolai Skorick (trumpet and composer), the Patrick S. Gilmore Band Award was won by Breanna Atnip (oboe and English horn) and Alex Weeks (trombone), The Director's Award for Band was won by Ezra Bloomfield (clarinet and Eb clarinet) and Riley Smith (bass trombone), the Louis Armstrong Jazz Award was won by Jackson Strahan (baritone saxophone), the Woody Herman Jazz Award was won by Ashley Meggett (flutes and bass), and the Donald L. Bresse Award for Leadership was won by Isabella D'Ambra (trumpet and piano) and Cameron Gearhart (percussion). This was the final concert directed by Tom Chapman, who is leaving LPHS after this school year. *Photo by Steve Pate.*

FofFRP hold trail cleanup, May 13



Above: On a windy day, May 13, Friends of Fox Run Park (FofFRP) held a trail cleanup session at the Santa Fe Regional Trail trailhead (Fox Run Park is well-maintained). Julie Haverluk, a FofFRP board member, set up for the two-hour event with trash bags and gloves for use in picking up trash along the trail. Occasional bike riders and joggers yelled, "Thank you!" and passing motorists honked to express appreciation for the effort. *Photo by Steve Pate.*

Flying Horse Medical Center



Left: The Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce, of which OCN is a member, held its monthly Business After Hours meeting at the Flying Horse Medical Center in Monument on May 16. The medical center is a full-service medical facility that offers concierge family medicine. Shown are Haley Chapin, director of Tri-Lakes Cares in Monument, with John Howe, OCN volunteer and community leader. *Photo by Steve Pate.*

Planned Fox Run Nature Center



Above: Several people from El Paso County Parks and Community Services, TDG Architecture firm, Studio Tectonic, and interested members of the community met May 17 at Antelope Trails Elementary to discuss the design and vision of the new Fox Run Nature Center. Projected to open in summer 2024, the project has been included in the county Master Plan since 2013. The Nature Center will provide indoor interpretations of the natural setting of the forest and an understanding of the ecosystem beyond. A media room will be available to the public for gatherings of all kinds, such as lectures, meetings, and parties (www.tdg-fnc.com/project-info). For more information regarding Fox Run Nature Center, contact Jason Meyer, Park Planning Division manager at jasonmeyer@elpaso.com. *Building rendition photo courtesy of TDG Architecture. Photo by Marlene Brown.*

Smoke from Canadian wildfires



Above: You could hardly see Mount Herman from Old Denver Road in Monument on May 23 because of the smoke from wildfires in Canada. It was like that for several days toward the end of May as dozens of wildfires burned in the Canadian province of Alberta. The National Weather Service issued air quality alerts for many of those days. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment advised people with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children to avoid staying outside for long periods. The smoke cleared out by May 26. *Photo by Michael Weinfeld.*

Monument storage tank update



Above: On May 24, the final grade to level the base of the excavation site for the 2-million-gallon Monument water storage tank was in process to completion for pouring the concrete floor during the first week of June. This expansive storage tank project site began early in 2022. The project is closely bordered by established residential properties of Forest View Estates, adjacent to the Red Rock Ranch area. On-site pouring and casting of the concrete panels for the storage tank have already been started. Erection of the tank panels will begin later in June. Trenching for the water pipeline has already been done through the Forest View Estates and Red Rock Ranch residential roads. Continuation of laying the pipeline is progressing along Highway 105 into downtown Monument. *Caption by Sharon Williams. Photo courtesy of Adams Brien.*

Arthop, May 18



Above: After an afternoon downpour, sunshine burst through the clouds just in time for visitors to enjoy the Monument Art Hop. Here, artist and gallerist Daryl Muncey (far right) engaged with visitors at his gallery on May 18. Muncey has renovated the building and grounds over the last few years to be his art studio and decided to open it as a friendly, enjoyable art gallery as well. Muncey specializes in faith-based and abstract artworks. *Photo by Janet Sellers.*

Claude Bourbon at TLCA, May 19

Right: Claude Bourbon and his exemplary guitar style returned to the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA) stage on May 19. Along with his unique and dynamic singing, Bourbon captivated the TLCA audience by seamlessly changing musical genres such as classical, folk, blues, Spanish, between and within songs. Bourbon's sets included Cold River, the title track from his 2018 album release, Did Somebody Make a Fool out of You, Last Train to Arkansas, a cover of Tony Joe White's The Guitar Don't Lie and Frederic Chopin's Prelude No. 4. Information on upcoming events at the TLCA is at www.trilakesarts.org. *Photo by David Futey.*



TLC STABLE graduation, May 23



Above: Tri-Lakes Cares strives to promote stability for its clients with an eight-week workshop called Secrets to a Better Life (STABLE). The program focuses on financial stability, time management, and social skills, encouraging participants to examine their past, learn about resources, and build public speaking and negotiation skills. The graduation celebration on May 23 included friends, family, and supporters as well as El Paso County commissioners and representatives from the Monument Town Council. After speeches by guests and a former graduate, current graduates received their certificates and shared what they learned and their goals for the future. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*



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An important message for our readers
OCN needs your help!

Our Community News is an all-volunteer organization. For the past 20 years, our volunteers have provided unbiased reporting on important local issues, including real estate development, fire departments, school districts, and water availability. We have provided a very favorable platform for advertising local businesses. We have published letters to the editor to allow you to express your opinions on events affecting the Tri-Lakes area.

Now we find that we have more tasks than we have volunteers. Some vital jobs where we could use your help:

- Reporters. Reporting on local meetings, what

- they talked about and what they decided.
 - Mailing assistants. Counting and lifting tubs of papers to take the monthly mailing to the post offices and stacks of papers to local businesses, loading and unloading mailing tubs from a truck at two locations, preparing postoffice paperwork, tub labels, subscription labels, etc.
 - Drivers. Driving a rental truck to various post offices once a month.
 - Ad sales assistants. We need volunteers who love OCN to contact local businesses and encourage them to advertise in OCN.
- The time and skills involved vary greatly from job to

job. OCN will provide whatever equipment and training you need.

Please join us today! Meet a group of interesting and committed people. Learn new skills—use your enthusiasm and creativity to benefit our community and celebrate unfiltered information.

Please call Publisher John Heiser at (719) 488-3455, or email johnheiser@ocn.me to see how you can contribute. Contact John today! He is waiting to hear from you. Together we can ensure that OCN continues to provide a vital service to our wonderful Tri-Lakes community.

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.

Student community volunteers

Many students need volunteer hours for scouting, civics classes, or other clubs volunteering hours. Monument Community Garden as well as Friends of Fox Run Park will have some openings for student volunteers (and grown-ups, too) for the 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 by other volunteers. Volunteers are needed weekly, in harvest time, twice a week. Friends of Fox Run Park also has openings for volunteers for various tasks. Besides tasks, there will be a short information and skills demonstration for each 2-3 hour session. Contact Janet Sellers at JanetSellers@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.

Slash/mulch program

Slash drop off through **Sep. 10**, (\$2/load). Free mulch pick up through **Sep. 16**. Hours: Tue. & Thu. 5-7:30 pm, Sat. 7 am-4 pm, Sun noon-4 pm. Mulch loader Sat. (\$5/2 cubic yards). Located in Black Forest, Herring and Shoup roads. Volunteers needed for shifts. Info: www.bfslash.org.

Trail Repair Volunteers Needed

Friends of Monument Preserve (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. Trail Repair work days are scheduled on the second Tuesday of the month from April-October. Next meeting: Tue., **June 13**, 5 pm. Meet at the Mt. Herman trailhead off Mt. Herman Rd and Nursery Rd and bring gloves. Tools will be provided.

Neighborhood safety

What qualifies as suspicious activity? "If you see something, say something." It's vital to report to local law enforcement. Suspicious activity can refer to any incident, event, individual or activity that seems unusual or out of place. Some common examples of suspicious activities include: A stranger loitering in your neighborhood or a vehicle cruising the streets repeatedly. Someone peering into cars or windows. Here's what local authorities and Colorado Department of Public Safety says is needed information: Who did you see; what did you see; when did you see it; where did you see it; why it is suspicious. Call 911 or your local law enforcement agency.

Free search for Unclaimed Property

Unclaimed property is tangible or intangible property that has had no activity for a specific period of time. Once the

property is in the custody of the state of Colorado, the State will maintain custody of the property in perpetuity until the rightful owner or heirs come forward to claim. The State Treasurer's Office provides this service free of charge. Colorado: Great Colorado Payback - Colorado.gov (findyourunclaimedproperty.com) SAME AS: <https://colorado.findyourunclaimedproperty.com/app/what-is-ucp>

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.

County Trailability Program

A new program uses mobility vehicles to allow more people access to nature in ways previously inaccessible to them. Trail routes for each county nature center include the volunteers and staff, trained to accompany participants. Vehicle registrations can be made at the Nature Center May 1-Oct. 31. Contact El Paso County Regional Parks programs: Mary J Lewis at Bear Creek, or Jessica Miller at Fountain Creek, <https://communityservices.elpasoco.com/trailability/>.

Tri-Lakes Cares Needs Your Support

Tri-Lakes Cares is the only food pantry and human services organization located in and 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 find out 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 Monday thru Thursday, 10 am to 4 pm. For more information about Tri-Lakes Cares or how you can help, contact Nicole Pettigrew, Director of Client Programs, at 719-481-4864 Ext. 111.

Senior Beat newsletter—subscribe for free

Each monthly Senior Beat newsletter is full of information for local seniors, including the daily menu of the senior lunches offered Monday through Friday at the Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Highway 105, Palmer Lake. It also contains the schedule of the classes and events for the month at the Senior Citizens Center and senior-

friendly library programs. To subscribe, send an email with your name and mailing address to SeniorBeat@TriLakesSeniors.org. Senior Beat can also be viewed online at www.TriLakesSeniors.org.

Can you volunteer today?

- OCN needs your help. See article above.
- 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.americanantowns.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.

- El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) regular meeting, usually every Tue., 9 am. BOCC land use meetings are being held every first and third Tuesday of the month as needed at 1 pm. 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: 719-520-6430.
- Monument Town Council meeting, Mon., June 5 & 19, 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.
- Palmer Lake Board of Adjustments, Tue., June 6, 5 pm, 28 Valley Crescent St., Palmer Lake. Normally

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- meets first Tues., as needed.
- El Paso County Planning Commission meeting, Thu., June 1 & 15, 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>.
 - Woodmoor Water & Sanitation District board meeting, Mon., June 12, 1 pm, 1845 Woodmoor Dr., Monument. Normally meets second Mon. Info: 719-488-2525, www.woodmoorwater.com.
 - Lewis-Palmer School District 38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee (formerly DAAC), On summer hiatus until October. Usually meets monthly on second Tue., 6-8 pm, Monument. For details, the meeting site, see <https://www.lewispalmer.org/Page/2#calendar>. Contact info: tmckee@lewispalmer.org.
 - Tri-Lakes Wastewater Facility Joint Use Committee meeting, Tue., June 13, 10 am 16510 Mitchell Ave. Meets second Tue. Info: See <https://tlwastewater.com/index.html> Bill Burks, 719-481-4053.
 - Palmer Lake Sanitation District board meeting, Wed., June 16, 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., June 16, 6 pm Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Meets 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.
 - Palmer Lake Board of Trustees meeting, Thu., June 8, 22, 5 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent, Usually meets second and fourth Thu. Info: 719-481-2953. www.townofpalmerlake.com.
 - Lewis-Palmer School District 38 board meeting, Mon., (June 1 special meeting, 9:30-noon), June 26, 6-10 pm. Normally meets third Mon. This meeting of the Board of Education 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>. A budget hearing will be held. Contact Vicki Wood. Phone: 719.481.9546 Email: vwood@lewispalmer.org Website: <https://www.lewispalmer.org>.
 - Monument Sanitation District board meeting, Wed., June 14, 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., June 14, 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., June 14, 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>.
 - Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District board meeting, in person or via Zoom, Wed., June 21, 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.
 - El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority meeting, Thu., June 15, 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., June 15, 1:30 pm, 15850 Holbein Dr. In 2023, meets fourth Wed., Check the website for the access code for the electronic meeting. Info: 719-488-3603, www.donalawater.org.
 - Triview Metropolitan District board meeting, Thu., June 15, 5:30 pm, 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302, Monument. Normally meets third Thu. Info: 719-488-6868, www.triviewmetro.com.
 - Monument Academy Town Hall meeting on Gender Issues, Tue. June 27, 6 pm. East Campus. Info 719-481-1950, <https://www.monumentacademy.net>.
 - Woodmoor Improvement Association Board Meeting, Wed., June 28, 7 pm, Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. The WIA Board normally meets fourth Wed. Info: 719-488-2693, www.woodmoor.org.
 - Monument Fire District board meeting, in person or via Zoom, Wed., June 28, 6:30 pm., Station 1, 18650 Highway 105, Monument. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining instructions at <http://www.monumentfire.org>, or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin, at 719-484-0911. Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday.
 - Donald Wescott fire protection district meeting, Meets every other month on the fourth Wed. The next meeting is July 26, 4:30 pm, at Station 1, 18650 Highway 105 Monument. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining instructions at <http://www.monumenfire.org> or contact Jennifer Martin, at 719-484-0911.

WEEKLY & MONTHLY EVENTS

- Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO) meeting, Sat., July 15, 10 am-12 pm., Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. Topic: Water issues. Members of local HOAs are welcome. Usually meets bi-monthly (Jan., Mar., May, July, Sep., Nov.) normally on the second Sat. of the month. www.nepco.org.
- The Centering Prayer Group at Black Forest Community Church, 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.
- Half Day Prayer Group at Benet Hill Monastery, 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.
- 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.
- Neighborhood Net Ham Radio, every Sat., 10 am Amateur ham radio operators practice for emergencies on weekly repeater nets so neighbors can help neighbors. Sign up at www.mereowx.org/neighborhood-net or contactus@mereowx.org.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church, every Sun., 8 and 11 am traditional, 9:30 am contemporary. Both in-person (no registration necessary) and live stream 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 7.
- 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 info@fuel.org. See ad on page 5.
- 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.
- German Conversation Group, every Mon., 1:30 pm, Monument Library, 1706 Woodmoor Drive. Public welcome with Intermediate to Advanced German speaking skills.
- 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
- Al-Anon Zoom Meeting, Just for Today Online, every Mon., 9-10 am Zoom Meeting ID: 889 4142 7446, Password 349309.
- 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 provided for children under age 11. Info: 303-946-2659, www.liferecoverygroups.com/meetings/life-recovery-group-3/.
- Old Fashioned Community Sing-along. First and third Mon. 5:30 to 6:30 pm Black Forest Community Church 6845 Shoup Rd. Come share the joy of singing old, familiar, catchy tunes just for fun. For details: kay@stricklan.net.
- 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.W0TLM.com
- 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 Church 12530 Black Forest Rd, Colorado Springs, CO 80908. For more information, contact RachelKLangley@gmail.com.
- 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 Education 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).
- Centering Prayer Group at Benet Hill Monastery, 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.
 - 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.
 - Friends of Monument Preserve (FOMP) Trail Repair monthly Work Days, second Tue. Apr.-Oct. October, Work Days 5-7 pm. Now through Sept. Work Days 6-8 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. Next meeting: Tues., June 13, 5:00 pm. Tools will be provided.
 - 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.
 - Senior Citizen Lunches, Connections Café sites, every Wed. will have "grab and go" (prepared meals). A \$2.25 donation is requested. Call 719-884-2300 to reserve your meal. Meals on Wheels and Home Delivered Meals will deliver frozen meals for the week to Monument. Food Pantry offers a "pick up only" Mon.-Fri., noon-12:30 pm, Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy. 105, Palmer Lake. Reservations requested: 719-884 2300. Check the Silver Key @ Tri-Lakes website for events and schedules, <https://www.silverkey.org/tri-lakes-events/>.
 - Colorado Springs Philharmonic Guild Listening Club, third Wed. Free virtual event. Maestro Wilson will conduct monthly hour-long programs. RSVP at www.cspguild.org.
 - 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. Duane Gritzmaker, dwgritz@gmail.com or 719-649-9220.
 - Senior Social, fourth Wed., 12455 Black Forest Rd. Info: www.aarpchapter1100blackforest.weekly.com.
 - 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>.
 - AARP Black Forest #1100, second Wed., noon. All ages welcome. In-person, Black Forest Lutheran Church, 12455 Black Forest Rd.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - Pikes Peak Genealogical Society, Wed., June 14, 6:30pm hangout begins. & pm meeting begins. Guests are welcome to attend the meeting via Zoom. Please request an invitation from the PPGS President@PPGS.org.
 - 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.
 - Palmer Divide Quiltmakers, first Thu., 6:30-8:30 pm at Monument Chamber of Commerce building, 166 2nd St, Monument, CO.
 - 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.
- Networking breakfast, first and third Thu., Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce in person or via Zoom 166 2nd Street Monument 7:30-9 am free registration at www.TriLakeschamber.com.
- 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.
- 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#.
- Palmer Lake Historical Society, Thu., June 15, meeting, 7 pm, doors open at 6:30 pm. Usually meets third Thu. Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent St., 7contact: Kokesdm@yahoo.com <https://palmerdividehistory.org>
- Friends of Fox Run Park, fourth Thu. Zoom meeting, 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, more. Info: friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com.
- Tri-Lakes Women's Club (TLWC) monthly meeting, now on summer break, usually 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.
- Senior Book Club, second Fri., 11 am-noon, Silver Alliance Senior Center, all are welcome. Coffee & snacks served. RSVP & info: Sue, 719-330-0241.
- Gleneagle Women's Club, membership luncheon, third Fri., Sept-June, various venues, 12 activity groups, i.e., hiking, bridge, etc. Guests welcome. For information contact Amy Miller, (310) 941-1590.
- 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.
- Tri-Lakes Monument Radio Association, Details: Contact Bob Witte, 719-659-3727.

SPECIAL EVENTS

- VOLUNTEER TODAY! Our Community News mailing day, Thu., June 29, 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.
- Palmer Lake Art Group: Color splash art show 2023, Thu., June 1 through Wed. June 28, Opening reception Fri., June 2, 6:30 pm. Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts 304 Highway 105 Palmer Lake.
- Make It Work Clinic 3D printers and PCs, Fri., June 2, 12:30 pm-3 pm. If you are having a problem with your 3D Printer, drop by to see if we can help get you back up and running. FREE. Donations appreciated. We are gauging interest in helping community members with their PCs, please email us if interested. enable@monumentalmimpact.org. 55 Adams St in Downtown Monument.
- Love shop, Restyle your furs event, Tue.-Wed., June 6 & 7, 10 am-5 pm, 251 Front St., see ad on page 8.
- Microsoft App In A Day, Sat. June 10, 9am-5pm. 55 Adams St. As a community member of Monumental Impact 365. Training: a FREE workshop on creating a Microsoft application. This is open to high schoolers and adults. Participants will need to bring their own laptop to continue their development. To register: <https://monumentalmimpact.org/workshops/>
- Church at Woodmoor 50th Jubilee events, Sun., June 4 - a BBQ, Sun., June 11 - sculpture unveiling and time capsule, Sun., June 18 - strawberries and ice cream. Church at Woodmoor, 18125 Furrow Rd, Monument.
- Summer dance session, June 5-21. A time to dance.
- MVEA Annual meeting of members, Thu., June 8, Dinner and door prizes. 10255 Lambert Road Falcon Colorado visit www.nvea.coop/annual-meeting
- Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce, Networking, Tue., June 13, 5 pm-7:00 pm, members free, \$15 for non-members. Details: www.trilakeschamber.com. 719-481-3282.
- Jackson Creek Community garage sale, Fri.-Sat., June 16-17, Contact Frances at 719-200-7387.

Our Community News is a member of the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce. Visit the chamber at www.trilakeschamber.com



Support Our Community. Volunteer with OCN!

Please join us today! Meet a group of interesting and committed people. Learn new skills—use your enthusiasm and creativity to benefit our community and celebrate unfiltered information. Please call John Heiser, Publisher, at (719) 488-3455, or email johnheiser@ocn.me to see how you can contribute. Contact us today!

- Front Range Maker's Market, Sat., June 17, 8:30 am-3 pm. Lewis-Palmer High School. Outdoors. Free, 90+ Artisan Makers, Boutiques & Food Trucks Info: www.Frmakersmarket.com. See ad on page 2.
- Art Hop, Thu., June 15, 5-8 pm., Downtown Monument. Every third Thu. through Sep. Free. See ad on page 2.
- Covered Treasures Bookstore, Thu., June 15, 5-8, authors Barbara Bowen signing Fireworks on the Fourth, Denise Gard signing Raven Woods and Christine Loomis signing, Colorado Off the Beaten Path, 13th edition, 105 Second Street, Monument., 719-481-2665.
- Palmer Lake Historical Society Annual Father's Day ice cream social, Sun., June 18, 2:00 to 4:00 (rain or shine) free ice cream and pie. July 9, 15, members walking tours led by Jim Sawatski, 10:00 to 1:00. Meet at Palmer Lake Town Hall, 42 Valley Crescent, Palmer Lake.
- Western Museum of Mining and Industry Family Days: STEaM camps: June 19-23, July 17-21.
- Palmer Lake Arts Council presents Shakespeare's Pericles, Prince of Tyre. FREE performances Saturday, June 24, 1:30 pm and 6:00p on the Village Green in Palmer Lake. Pre-show lecture at 12:30 pm. Bring a blanket or beach chair, it's an outdoor event. Rain place: the adjacent historic Palmer Lake Town Hall. More information at PLartscouncil.org
- Monument Hill Farmers Market, every Sat., 8 am to 2 pm. 66 Jefferson Street Monument. See ad on page 5.
- YMCA summer day camp, Info: www.ppymca.org/daycamp. See ad on page 6.
- Krueger Brothers Full-service Exterior General Contractor, Scott Northway 719-466-1676. See ad on page 32.
- Concerts in the park, every Wed., June 30-Aug. 9, 6:30 to 8:30 pm. Limbach Park.
- Jackson Creek Senior Living. Visit the website for upcoming events: www.jacksoncreekseniorliving.com. See ad on page 12.
- Affordable Flooring Connection, summer specials. See ad on page 2.
- Alpine Essentials Rec MJ dispensary, Special offer through July 3. See ad on page 13.
- ARt camp, save \$15 with code. www.artworkshop.com/coloradosprings. See ad on page 5.
- Cornerstone Cleaners, special offers through June 30. 1030 W. Baptist Road, near King Soopers. See ad on page 4.
- Eagle Wine & Spirits, special offers through June 30. Baptist Road next to King Soopers. See ad on page 3.
- Gleneagle Candle Co., special offers through June 30. 13796 Gleneagle Drive 80921. See ad on page 4.
- Monument Cleaners, special offers through June 30, 15932 Jackson Creek Pkwy., in Monument Marketplace. See ad on page 5.
- Monumental Med Spa, special offers for June. See ad on page 7.
- Noel Relief Centers, new patient specials. 950 Baptist Rd #130, Monument. See ad on page 7.
- The Living Room Plants, special offers through June 30, 12229 Voyager Pkwy, Suite 100. See ad on page 5.
- The Vanity Box, Special offers. See ad on page 3.
- Tri-Lakes Collision and Auto Service Center, special offers through June 30. 2101 Wolf Court, Monument. www.trilakescollision.com. See ad on page 5.
- Tri-Lakes Church of Christ, Vacation Bible School, Mon.-Thu., June 26-29. See ad on page 11.
- 4th of July parade, Monument Hill Kiwanis, See ad on page 9.

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.

- Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery, Walking the labyrinth, contemplative journey retreat, Fri.-Sat., July 14-15. www.benethillmonastery.org See ad on page 3.
- YMCA Summer mini camps, Mon.- Thurs., ages 3-10, see ad on page 6.

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.

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, July 1

Ad space reservations due: Fri., June 9
Finished ad artwork due: Fri., June 16
Letters to the editor due: Fri., June 16
Calendar items due: Fri., June 23

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



OCN is published on the first Saturday of each month by Colorado Cooperative Association
Our Community News, Inc.
John Heiser, President
(719) 488-3455—FAX: (828) 649-2720

Advertising: ads@ocn.me
Back issues: www.ocn.me
Editorial content: editor@ocn.me
Event information: calendar@ocn.me

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