

# Our Community News

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



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Free

Visit OCN on the web. We now have audio posted for many of the recent articles and videos for some events.



## Local Events

Readers should assume that event information published in this issue is subject to change and information should be confirmed a day or two before the event by calling the information number or checking the organization's website.

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

- OCN mailing days, Thu., Aug. 31 & Oct. 5, approx. 9 am-2 pm.
- Benet Hill Monastery: Celebrate the Season of Creation, Fri., Sep. 1 to Wed., Oct. 4. See ad on page 3.
- Labor Day weekend art festival, Sat.-Mon., Sep. 2-4, 10-5 pm. [www.commonwheel.com/festival.html](http://www.commonwheel.com/festival.html). Manitou.
- Monu-Palooza music festival, Sun., Sep. 3, Limbach Park. Music 12:30 to 8:00 pm.
- Wreaths Across America (WAA) invites all Americans to Wave the Flag on Tue., Sep. 12.
- Kiwanis Fundraiser for Heart of Monument Play Park (HoMPP), Thu. Sep. 14, 5-9 pm.
- Run4Hope 5K for Schools, Sat. Sep. 16. 9 a.m.
- 100+ Women Who Care: Social Gathering, membership drive. Wed., Sep. 20, 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.
- YMCA 5K race series. Early bird pricing ends Sep. 15. See ad on page 6.
- Last 2023 Art Hop, Thu., Sep. 21, 5-8 pm. See ad on page 2.
- Palmer Lake Historical Society, Thu., Sep. 21, 7 pm
- Fox Run Regional Park Lights Fest, Fri., Sep. 22, 4:30-8:30pm.
- Never Dead Riders Motorcycle Group Poker Run, Sat., Sep. 23. See ad on page 5.
- Little Log Church will hold a Service in the Park, Sun., Sep. 24.
- Eagle Wine and Spirits Charity Whiskey Live and Silent Auction, Thu., Sep. 28, 5:30-8 pm. See ad on page 2.
- Front Range Maker's Market, Sat.-Sun., Oct. 28 - 29. See ad on page 24.

**Empty Bowl Dinner and Silent Auction, Oct. 4, 5-7:30 pm! See ad on page 7.**



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## Construction causes dangerous traffic backups



**Above:** Aug. 15, the first day of school for all D38 schools, showed significant traffic backups by many schools due to several construction projects, including the Highway 105 and Jackson Creek Parkway expansions, along with other road projects by the county and special districts. At 3:30 p.m., the line of cars heading west on Highway 105 for the Monument Academy pickup was 45 cars long, with at least an equal number heading east on Vista Ridge Point to the front of the school. Cars were also backed up heading east on Highway 105 from the I-25 offramp, heading north on Knollwood Drive to MA, south on Woodmoor Drive past Lewis-Palmer Middle School, and Jackson Creek Parkway and Higby Road near Lewis-Palmer High School. While carlines are always challenging in the first weeks of school due to new routes and new parents, the construction added to the chaos. Cars were stuck at lights for multiple cycles due to cars blocking intersections. Some bus drivers deviated from their normal routes to avoid the worst traffic. By the second day, the district had adjusted some bus routes, and the Monument Police Department had deployed some officers to help direct traffic at the busiest intersections. The county Department of Public Works is considering opening an additional road to help with the traffic situation. Please be careful on our roads and look out for students and other drivers. For more information, see <http://EPC-Hwy105AConstruction.com/> and <http://www.jacksoncreekpkway.com>, as well as your school's website for carline procedures and bus routes. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*



*Monument Academy School Board, Aug. 10 and 19*

## Board receives ACLU demand letter

By Jackie Burhans

The Monument Academy (MA) board called a rare Saturday special meeting on Aug. 19 to discuss a demand letter from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) on their resolution, proclamation, and policies regarding transgender, gender nonconforming, and nonbinary students.

At its regular meeting on Aug. 10, MA's board heard about a new quarterly dashboard, enrollment updates, carline information, and finances.

### Board discusses ACLU demand letter

The MA board met at 4 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 19, to go into executive session for legal advice on specific legal matters regarding a demand letter received by legal counsel, to discuss security measures, and to discuss personnel matters with prior notice. All board members were present, along with the board's lawyer, Brad Miller of Miller Farmer Carson Law LLC.

The board returned after an hour to unanimously approve the creation of a Legal Affairs subcommittee to address issues regarding their resolution. Board President Ryan Graham and Director Karen Hoida will serve on the subcommittee. Graham explained that MA had received a demand letter from the ACLU of Colorado addressing its recent resolution regarding transgen-

der students. There was no imminent threat of litigation, he said.

The letter, which is included in MA's board meeting highlight document, is titled "Unlawful actions of Monument Academy and its school board" and says that MA's actions undermine the safety and well-being of transgender, gender nonconforming, and nonbinary students and flout multiple state and federal laws. ACLU notes that the refusal to provide students access to restrooms consistent with their gender is prohibited by the Colorado Anti-Discrimination Act (CADA) per CRS 24-34-601 and that MA's dress code impermissibly treats students differently based on gender, which violates CADA as well as students' constitutional rights to freedom of expression.

Finally, the ACLU characterizes MA's recent resolution as signaling its open hostility to transgender, gender nonconforming, and nonbinary students, as well as to Colorado and federal nondiscrimination laws. The ACLU requested a substantive response from MA by Aug. 31 and reserves all rights to file necessary legal action to ensure compliance with Colorado and federal law. You can see the demand letter at <https://bit.ly/MA-ACLU-Demand>.

*MA (Cont. on 2)*

*Woodmoor Improvement Association, Aug. 23*

## Board hears about possible extension of Furrow Road

By Jackie Burhans

At its Aug. 23 meeting, the Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) board heard about traffic-related issues and solutions and discussed moving its investments to higher interest-bearing accounts. Board directors provided updates in each of their areas of responsibility.

### Furrow Road extension back on the table

The WIA board discussed area traffic issues stemming from construction projects and the start of the school year. President Brian Bush commended Woodmoor Public Safety (WPS) Chief Kevin Nielsen for providing guid-

ance about the change in WPS' role in school traffic control.

Public Safety Director Brad Gleason reported that Highway 105 has transitioned to night work for at least another week, and the complete closure of Knollwood Drive has been delayed until early September. He also reported that the El Paso County Department of Public Works was also considering opening Furrow Road south of Highway 105 to Higby Road as soon as feasible, making traffic more efficient for emergency vehicles. Note: Furrow Road is closed off south of Highway 105 at Lamplight Drive.

*WIA (Cont. on 6)*

*Triview Metropolitan District, Aug. 17*

## Water usage sets record high

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Triview Metropolitan District (TMD) meeting on Aug. 17, the board heard about recording breaking high-water usage in July, approved a water use agreement and the completion of a new park, and received an update on the Northern Delivery System (NDS) pipeline project. The district held an executive session that resulted in an exclusion of property.

### Water usage reaches all-time high

Superintendent Shawn Sexton said that July set a record high for water pumped at about 49 million gallons, with a 9% variance. All wells are available, and all three plants are running well. The district is approaching an extended period of pumping capacity at 17.5 gallons per minute, and that can be problematic, he said.

District Manager James McGrady said August is looking equally high for water usage, pumping 2.2-2.3 million gallons per day. The district has seven or eight wells running and can meet the demand without using the ninth. The NDS pipeline will make a huge difference once operational and will meet the demands of the district at buildout, he said.

Vice President Anthony Sexton said it might be the last July the district pumped well water.

President Mark Melville said if a problem occurs with the NDS, the district has about a million gallons of water in the tanks, about one day's worth of storage capacity. In an emergency, the tanks would provide the residents with enough water to take a shower in the morning, but the district has the capability to pump about 1.5 million to 2 million gallons of groundwater a day to maintain supply to the district, he said.

### Water use agreement

Water Attorney Chris Cummins said that late that afternoon, a water use sharing agreement had been reached between Triview and the Arkansas Ground and Reservoir Association (AGRA), both representing the majority ownership of the Excelsior Irrigating

*TRIVIEW (Cont. on 7)*