

Our Community News

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



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Issue #142 — Volume 12 Number 12 — Saturday, December 1, 2012

Free

Local Events

See pages 31-35 for details of these and many other local events.

Holiday Boutique and Bazaar, Sat., Dec. 1, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Monument Small Town Christmas, Sat., Dec. 1, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Kiwanis' 7th Annual North Pole at Tri-Lakes Arts and Crafts Fair, Sat., Dec. 1 and Sun., Dec. 2.

Monument Library: Holiday Harps, Sat., Dec. 1, 2-3:30

Palmer Lake Yule Log Pot Luck Dinner, Tue., Dec. 4, 6 p.m.

Starlight Dance, Fri., Dec. 7, 6:30-10 p.m.

Hammerstadt & Wendy Woo Benefit Concert for TLCA, Fri., Dec. 7, 7 p.m.

Monument Small Town Christmas Kids' Shopping Day, Sat., Dec. 8, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

4th Annual Gleneagle Festival of Lights & Hayride, Sat., Dec. 8, 5-8 p.m.

11th Annual Tri-Lakes Community Christmas Handbell Concert, Sat., Dec. 8, 7 p.m.

Annual Palmer Lake Yule Log Hunt, Sun., Dec. 9, 1 p.m.

Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA) Resident Artists Opening Reception, Fri., Dec. 14, 6-8 p.m.

Rocky Mountain Music Alliance Free Duo-Piano Concert, Sun., Dec. 16, 7 p.m.

A Christmas Celebration: Tri-Lakes Music Association (TLMA) Annual Free Christmas Concert, Fri.-Sat., Dec. 21-22, 7 p.m., plus 2 p.m. matinee Sat.

Wescott Fire Department Santa Patrol, Sat., Dec. 22, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Christmas in the Pines, Sat., Dec. 22, 6-8 p.m.

A Monumental New Year's Eve, Mon., Dec. 31, 7 p.m. to 12:30 a.m.

Rocky Mountain Music Alliance Free Concert, Sat., Jan. 12, 7 p.m.

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Above: Veterans' Day—From left, front row, are VFW Post 7829 Commander Joseph E. Carlson, his sons, Cub Scouts Andy and Michael Carlson, and Cub Scout Logan Bourg. In the rear are Post Adjutant Pat Staffieri and member Mike Surma as they begin the semi-annual Buddy Poppy distribution. The funds collected are used to assist veterans and their families and their special needs. The Cub Scouts were instrumental in a successful drive for funds to support veterans and their families. *Photo by Bernard Minetti.* See the additional photos on page 29.

Palmer Lake Town Council, Nov. 8

Higher water rates proposed

By Lisa Hatfield

On Nov. 8, in a combined Palmer Lake Town Council and Liquor Licensing Authority and Medical Marijuana Authority meeting, the Town Council discussed raising water rates for 2013. Officials said the rate increases are needed to address capital expenses, such as the repair of aging water lines and infrastructure, and operating expense increases in processing the water.

Trustees Shana Ball and Michael Maddox were excused from the meeting.

New water rates discussed

Town Clerk Tara Berreth said the town needs a water rate hike starting in January. "The water lines are old and we need to repair them," Berreth explained. "Right now we are just putting a band-aid on the problem. We need to get capital." The town is allowed to review water rates twice a year, but it has not done so since January 2011. About "\$186,000 would be generated to start fixing lines," if the proposed new water rate structure is adopted, Berreth said.

The proposed plan is to increase water rates in three tiers, with the largest jump for residential customers who are the most egregious water users. Customers in Tier I using 0-15,000 gallons a month would see rates increase by 10 cents to \$3.53 per 1,000 gallons; rates for customers in Tier II using 15,000-20,000 gallons a month would increase by 17 cents to \$5.77 per 1,000 gallons, Berreth explained. The highest increase in rates would hit customers in Tier III using more

than 20,000 gallons of water a month, increasing to \$7 per 1,000 gallons.

"The goal is to penalize people who are watering their yard and filling their swimming pools" during a drought, Berreth said. "Those are the kinds of people we want to penalize, and we will get this money (for capital improvements) from them." However, Berreth said, "It might backfire; (the high-end users) might (start to) conserve water, and then we don't get any money.... It's a catch-22. We need the revenue to do the lines, but we want them to conserve water, too."

Berreth said the town is allowed to ask for up to a 9 percent increase in base rates, but it is planning to ask for only a 3 percent increase, from \$51.02 to \$52.21, or an increase of \$1.19 per residential customer. This base rate revenue will be used to pay for increases in overhead expenses, including testing cost increases, electricity bill tripling, and overall cost of water "just going up in general," Berreth said.

Trustee Jerry Davis asked if people in Tier I, with the lowest water use, could be exempted from a rate increase. Berreth said, "The ordinance states that if you raise the base, you have to raise the capital improvement by 10 percent, so you could (leave Tier I the same) ... it's not going to make a huge impact."

An audience member who did not identify himself asked, "What if you just increase the base by 9 percent?" instead of changing the rate structure. Berreth said that won't help, because it's the profit from water sales, not the base rate, "that will go" (Continued on page 2)



Left: The Historic Monument Merchants Association holiday celebrations that started with Small Business Saturday, Nov. 24, and Small Town Christmas, Dec. 1, continues with Kids' Shopping Day, Dec. 8. Many merchants will feature specially-priced gifts for younger gift-givers and don't miss Cinderella's Coach giving rides at 47 Third St. in Monument. *Photo provided by Secret Window Gallery.*

Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, Nov. 14

Director presents his fire chief criteria

By Bernard L. Minetti

Director Roger Lance submitted a document Nov. 14 to the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District board that provided the job description, qualifications, and the vacancy announcement for the new fire chief that he alone authored. It was not requested by the board. He said the board had to "finally get off the dime" and start working toward hiring a new chief.

Treasurer John Hildebrandt asked how this differed from the recently updated Aug. 23 version of the fire chief's job description. Lance said, "No this is, this is something I put together..." The document "is what I think we're looking for ... just for your review and thoughts."

Director Jacob Shirk asked Lance if the criteria came from the district Personnel Manual. Lance said, "I read it, but no, I did not compare it to that..."

Hildebrandt asked Lance if this was just for informational purposes at this time. Lance answered, "Right. It's a draft thing ... I think the Personnel Manual is gonna need some significant changes..."

(Continued on page 5)

Monument Sanitation District, Nov. 15

Monthly fee to rise to \$30

By Jim Kendrick

On Nov. 15, the Monument Sanitation District board unanimously approved a monthly use fee increase of \$5, from \$25 to \$30. The use fee increase will take effect April 1, 2013, and be payable starting May 1, 2013. This will produce about \$39,000 through Dec. 31, 2013, for the district's enterprise fund.

The current 2013 draft district budget presented at this meeting estimated a total ending balance for 2012 of about \$288,000. However, the total ending balance for 2013 would be only about \$266,000, a decrease of \$22,000, despite the approved 20 percent fee increase.

District Manager Mike Wicklund asked the board to approve the fee increase at this meeting so he could finalize the revenue line in the final district 2013 budget he will prepare for the public budget hearing at 7 p.m. on Dec. 20 in the district conference room, 130 Second St. Information on the 2013 budget hearing can be obtained at the district office, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. or at 481-4886.

The absence of board President Ed Delaney was excused. Board Secretary Kristi Schutz chaired this meeting.

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