

A Perspective on Our Community

Highway 105 improvements moving forward

By André P. Brackin

For many years now, the dispatch phone at the El Paso County Public Services Department has stayed busy taking calls from residents concerned about Highway 105. The concerns include everything from traffic signal problems, congestion, and unsafe conditions at intersections to steep grades, poor drainage, maintenance problems of all kinds, and, as you may imagine, a range of traffic problems during inclement weather. (And yes, I've responded to drivers during snow events many times and have experienced the conditions on all the roads in wintertime in northern El Paso County.)

In conjunction with all the challenges this department has with maintaining this roadway, we have listened carefully to public comments and have started this project to begin addressing these many issues. Nearby Baptist Road was widened to four lanes recently, but neither Baptist Road nor future improvements to County Line Road will relieve the traffic and other problems that 105 is now experiencing or will experience as traffic needs increase over time.

A little history is in order. Until a few years ago, this roadway was maintained by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). The county inherited this road into our system through a swap agreement with the state, in which the county swapped its maintenance responsibilities for Powers Boulevard, and received this roadway along with several others in return (which made sense, as Powers is becoming a freeway and is now State Highway 21). So the county is now addressing the increasing traffic issues as traffic increases on 105—which was never designed to carry the traffic it presently experiences.

I was pleased with the outstanding attendance and interest at the July 10 meeting! This was the third in a series of public meetings designed to gather citizen input from those who drive, live near, or have businesses adjacent to the highway. Also present were CDOT traffic engineers, who were available to answer questions about the planned improvements at the intersection of Highway 105 and State Highway 83, which is funded construction next year.

Any improvement descriptions presented for 105 at this point are concepts to take forward. There remain plenty of public input opportunities as we get into preliminary design, hopefully next year. The project's continuance is dependent on either federal funding or the passage of the next round of the Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority's (PPRTA) list of projects by public vote.

This project is like many other road and bridge projects in that the needs here are brought to this department by citizens: It is a citizen-driven project. My responsibility is applying current design criteria in its planning and design, ensuring that street and highway safety standards are adhered to, and that the funds expended on the project are utilized as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Anyone interested is encouraged to check the county's website, elpasoco.com, for updates or call my office at 520-6460.

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Woodmoor Improvement Association Board of Directors, July 25

Residents show renewed interest in fire mitigation efforts

By Harriet Halbig

On July 25, the Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) board discussed concerns about fire danger in the wake of the Waldo Canyon Fire.

Forestry Director Eric Gross said that homeowners have expressed their concern in many ways. There were more requests for Firewise lot evaluations in the last few weeks than in all of 2011, and residents have also requested a second chipping day in the fall.

Gross and Firewise Chairman Jim Woodman have invited John Vincent of the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Department to speak on the subject of "Why the Mountain Shadows home destruction can happen in Woodmoor." Vincent has since been called out of town but there will be a substitute speaker. Slides of lots in Woodmoor will be used as examples during the presentation.

There was a brief discussion of funding for fire mitigation work in Woodmoor. Gross had said at June's board meeting that the association had not received a Firewise grant for reimbursement of 50 percent of homeowner expenses for 2012. He said that the application for the 2013 grants had been submitted on July 20. The rules governing the grants change from one year to the next. Funding received for 2013 can be used over a three-year period.

Gross said that grants last year did not include El Paso, Douglas, and Teller counties, but were confined to national and state forest land. He said that the success of mitigation efforts in Cedar Heights may result in a change in emphasis to more populous areas.

Gross pointed out that homeowners may receive tax credits for doing mitigation. He said the present concern about the subject may be short-lived, and he hopes to find a way to sustain it.

Gross also reported that he continues to assess the

condition of common areas and seeks bids for the removal of dead trees and slash from these areas. WIA must follow the same rules as individuals and remove dead trees within 30 days of their identification.

Finally, Gross reminds homeowners that dead trees on private property should be reported to the Covenants Committee rather than Forestry.

President Jim Hale thanked Woodman and Gross for arranging the fire prevention program. He said that covenants regarding the number of vehicles allowed in a driveway and the duration of stay of RVs and trailers were restored as of July 15. These covenants had been suspended during the Waldo Canyon Fire emergency so residents could offer shelter for evacuees without penalty.

Other matters

Reporting for Homeowners Association (HOA) Manager Matt Beseau, Hale said that 700 signatures are still required for ratification of the association's governing documents. Beseau is also interviewing for a new employee to administer the covenants.

Treasurer Nick Oakley reported that the association continues to be under budget on expenditures and doing well in terms of revenue because all offices in the Barn have been rented.

Public Safety Director Paul Lambert reported that Woodmoor is now under a Stage 1 fire ban, which prohibits open burning.

Woodmoor Public Safety (WPS) Chief Kevin Nielsen reported that there have been many reports of bear sightings in the past month, including a mother with two cubs, a mother with one cub, and an individual male. He said that WPS officers shoot the bears with paint balls when a report is received.

Nielsen also said that the Division of Wildlife is re-

sponding to the frequency of sightings by patrolling the area and issuing citations to homeowners who leave a garage door open or put trash out the night before it is to be collected. Repeat offenders will receive a summons to appear in court.

There will be a parade involving first responders in the Tri-Lakes area on Labor Day. Two WPS vehicles will participate.

Covenants Director Darren Rouse reported that the primary causes for complaints in June were barking dogs, exterior maintenance, noncompliant signs, and slash. There were 20 pre-HOA inquiries involving sales of homes in Woodmoor.

Architectural Control Director Anne Stevens-Gountanis reported that the committee has a new member and that the design for the WPS garage has been approved.

Common Areas Director W. Lee Murray reported that mowing and noxious weed control are taking longer than anticipated due to high fire danger and high temperatures. The chemicals used for weed control cannot be used at high temperatures.

Mowing in South Woodmoor is complete.

Bids are being sought for repair of the roof, siding and deck of the Barn. A new janitorial contractor is also being sought.

The Board of Directors of the Woodmoor Improvement Association meets at 7 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of the month in the Association's Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Drive, Monument. The next meeting will be held on Aug. 22.

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July Weather Wrap

of these deep drought conditions we've been experiencing for the last few months.

Just when we thought cool, wet weather would never return, we were proven wrong. After a continued hot and dry spell to start the month, relief finally moved in starting on the 6th. Higher levels of moisture, some of which was associated with the beginning of the North American monsoon or Southwest monsoon, began to affect the region just after the Fourth of July. This combined with an unstable atmosphere to produce thunderstorms and brief heavy rain starting on the afternoon and evening of the 6th.

Cooler air continued to work into the region over the next few days with temperatures falling to below-normal levels on the 7th and 8th. Highs were held in the 70s both days, and moisture continuing to stream into the region

from the southwest and rain was common. Some of this rain was heavy at times, resulting in some flooding along the Front Range, especially in and around the recent burn scar areas. This will continue to be a problem in the area for several years. Some areas around Black Forest received over 3 inches of rain over the two-day period, with just about everyone getting a nice soaking.

Just when it seemed we had finally broken the drought and changed the weather pattern, warm, dry air moved back in over the region. The monsoon plume that brought cooler temperatures and plenty of moisture from the 6th through the 9th shifted just to our west for the majority of the next two weeks. This brought plenty of rain to the high country and Western Slope, but left us high and dry for the most part. Temperatures warmed from below average 70s on the 9th and 10th to above average upper

By Bill Kappel

Temperatures were again above average for July, but not at the record levels of June. Fortunately, we made up some ground in the precipitation department, with most of us receiving slightly more than normal amounts. Most of this came during the second and last weeks of the month as the Southwest monsoon made several brief intrusions into the area.

The month started off with temperatures still fire-cracker hot, with low 90s each afternoon through the 4th, about 10-15° warmer than normal. In addition, quiet weather each morning gave way to afternoon clouds, scattered thunderstorms, and a few rain showers. Hopefully, the monsoonal moisture that has begun to affect the region will continue to deepen and allow for some cooler weather with nice soaking rain and help to alleviate some