

# Our Community News

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



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Issue #139 — Volume 12 Number 9 — Saturday, September 1, 2012

Free

## Local Events

See pages 34-39 for details of these and many other local events.

### Monument Celebration Festival and Parade

Mon., Sep. 3, 7 a.m.-5 p.m. The Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce has rescheduled its canceled July 4<sup>th</sup> Street Fair for Labor Day. Pancake breakfast, 7-10 a.m., at St. Peter Catholic Church, 55 Jefferson St. The parade down Second Street honoring Tri-Lakes Emergency Services begins at 10 a.m., and the street fair on Front Street goes until 5 p.m. Activities at Limbach Park (live music, a beer & wine tent, and kids' activities) go until 5 p.m. Info: 481-3282, www.trilakeschamber.com, or email office@trilakeschamber.com.

**Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District 1 Open House, Mon., Sep. 3, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

**Meet the Candidates Night, Fri., Sep. 7, 6-8 p.m.**

**NEPCO Meeting, Sat., Sep. 8, 10 a.m.-noon. Wildfire mitigation.**

**Premiering at the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA), Historic Artists of the Pikes Peak Region, Fri., Sep. 14, 7 p.m.**

**TechDay2012: Get Started in Ham Radio, Sat., Sep. 15, 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m.**

**Chili Cook Off and Salsa Tasting, Sat., Sep. 15, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.**

**Front Range Open Studios Tour, Sat.-Sun., Sep. 15-16**

**Tri-Lakes Community Blood Drive, Tue., Sep. 18, 3-7 p.m.**

**The Last 2012 Art Hop, Thu., Sep. 20, 5-8 p.m.**

**Free Annual Family Health and Wellness Fair, Sat., Sep. 22, 7 a.m.-noon**

**El Paso County Parks Master Plan Update Informational Meeting, Mon., Sep. 24, 7 p.m.**

**39<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Arts & Crafts Fair, Sat.-Sun., Oct. 6-7, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Sat.; 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Sun.**

**Creepy Crawl 5K Run/Walk and 1-mile Kids Run, Sat., Oct. 27, 9 a.m. 5K, 10 a.m. Kids Run**

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## 911 Rescue 4 visits Tri-Lakes

By Stacey Paxson

New York Fire Department Rescue 4, damaged during the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks was housed for a few days at the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District.

Rescue 4 is now a rolling memorial touring the western U.S. Rescue 4 is one of two rescue vehicles that serve as mobile memorials to the nine men from this crew who lost their lives when the South Tower collapsed. The door from Rescue 3 was salvaged and replaced a damaged door on Rescue 4. On the Rescue 3 door are the names of the five men from Rescue 3 who died in the pursuit of helping save others.

Rescue 4 will be on display Sept. 3 for the Monument Celebration Festival and Parade until 12:30 p.m. at Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. Parking will be available at the Pinz Bowling Alley.

For more information on the Remembrance Rescue Project, visit www.remembrance.com. For more information on all the apparatus that will be on display at Station 1 on Labor Day, call (719) 484-0911. Photo by Stacey Paxson

### A Perspective on Our Community

## Controversy surrounds fire protection district board's recent actions

By Jim Kendrick

In the past several months, there has been a great deal of controversy regarding actions by the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District board and its former President Charlie Pocock. A chronological summary:

On May 8, the Tri-Lakes board held a special meeting during which Pocock stated that the district needed to initiate an investigation of "numerous allegations of misconduct" and to "approve estimated cost and not-to-exceed cost for third-party management review, which may include investigation, analysis, and recommendations" regarding the allegations.

Pocock explained that the investigation would "include" the board, the fire chief, and the battalion chiefs. Pocock did not say who had made the allegations or whom the allegations were against. He said there was a list of things that the district would like to know from the investigators and that anyone "will have an equal opportunity to refute or support the allegations, and any misconduct will be corrected according to their recommendations." Pocock added, "We estimate that there are probably 15 people who would testify or give interviews."

The board approved an expenditure of \$10,000 to have the Mountain States Employers Council conduct the secret investigation and prepare a secret report for the board.

On May 9, the district issued a press

release—dated April 25—announcing that the board had voted at its regular meeting April 25 to put a 3 mill tax levy increase—from 8.5 mills to 11.5 mills—on the November ballot. On April 25, the board had also agreed to begin the process of forming a fire authority with Donald Wescott Fire Protection District; this was not included in the press release.

At the May 25 regular Tri-Lakes board meeting, Si Sibell, former Monument mayor and former Woodmoor/Monument Fire Protection District Board president, called the investigation a "witch hunt." Sibell had been Pocock's partner in merging the Woodmoor/Monument district with the Tri-Lakes district.

Pocock stated on May 25 that he met with several senior members of the paid staff on a Saturday morning because they had complaints against several members of the staff. On May 8, the board decided that the complaints were so severe that an independent contractor was required to address the complaints. The Mountain States investigation report was to be completed for the board by the week after Labor Day. Pocock said he would not discuss any portion of the investigation or personnel matters. Director Barbara Kelly withdrew her resignation while the investigation was in process.

The board increased the funding authorized for the investigation to \$12,000 even though Pocock said something had

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Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, Aug. 22

## Pocock resigns, cites health reasons

By Bernard L. Minetti

Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District board Vice President Bill Ingram acted as board president pro-tempore in the absence of Charlie Pocock at district's board meeting Aug. 22. Ingram opened the meeting by reading Pocock's letter of resignation as president.

Pocock wrote, "Two years ago I had major surgery to repair a very large abdominal aortic aneurysm. Last Monday (I) had a CT scan as part of my annual progress evaluation and on Thursday my surgeon called to say that my progress was not satisfactory and that additional surgery will be necessary. This is a real blow and I do not feel I cannot give it my full attention without resigning my position on the Board of Directors."

Following the reading of the letter, the board agreed that Pocock should retain his badge in his retirement.

Pocock was recently the center of attention in the investigation and subsequent dismissal of district Fire Chief Robert Denboske. This action led to the initiation of a recall movement of all the board members who voted for the dismissal. For details, see the Perspective piece on the left.

### Shirk and Bassett seek appointment

Ingram read a letter from Monument Police Chief Jacob Shirk announcing his intent for consideration of appointment to the board vacancy left by Pocock. Ingram then introduced Allan Bassett, another citizen interested in the filling the board vacancy, and requested that he also submit a letter of intent for filling the position.

### Treasurer's report

Treasurer John Hildebrandt said that through July, the district had received \$2.8 million or 95.67 percent of the annual budgeted property tax income. Specific ownership tax income was at 63.68 percent of the expected income. Overall revenues amounted to 58.33 percent of the expected amount for the year. While this was below the 2011 level, it was above the budgeted expectation for 2012.

Ambulance revenues were at \$296,662 or 53.94 percent of expected budgeted revenue. Hildebrandt noted that the deficiency had improved slightly over the previous month's deficit. Overall expenses were 1.53 percent under budget for the year to date.

The board discussed the proposed wording of Resolution 12-003, which described the mill levy tax increase ballot measure. It was decided to have a special workshop meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Sept. 4 at the district administration office to set the title for the ballot issue and approve

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