

in 24 hours. If this report is verified, it will be a 24-hour Colorado state record.

Flooding from these steady, heavy rains was exacerbated by the already saturated conditions from the above-normal rainfall of July and August. Of course, all the clouds and precipitation kept daytime temperatures well below normal, with highs generally in the 60s through the period. In this part of Colorado, we are almost never "normal." Instead we switch from one extreme to the other. In this case, we go from extreme drought to extreme flood with time in between. Can't wait to see what winter decides to bring our way.

Unsettled and cool conditions continued to affect the region during the last full week of summer. High temperatures were held well below normal on the 15th and 16th, only reaching the low 60s. Scattered afternoon and early evening shower and thunderstorms developed, accumulating another half inch or so of moisture. Quiet and mild conditions then returned for most of the rest of the week, with highs rebounding back to normal levels in the mid-70s on the 17th and 18th. A weak cool front brought temperatures back down on the 19th and 20th and provided some morning fog and low clouds. However, no storms developed, so besides some drizzle, we stayed dry for the most part.

Our first "fall-like" storm of the season began to affect the region late on the weekend. Ahead of this storm,

gusty southwest winds brought mild conditions both Saturday and Sunday, before the clouds and showers moved in starting later on Sunday. Highs reached back into the 70s both days, but as the autumnal equinox occurred at 5:44 p.m. that afternoon, so did our seasons seem to change from summer to fall just that quick.

The first week and a half of fall was quiet around the region. We got our first freeze of the season on the morning of the 24th in some of the colder spots around the area. Sunshine and pleasant temperatures were the norm for the remainder of the month. One strong storm system moved through the Rockies, bringing heavy snow to Wyoming and snow to our mountains on the 26th and 27th. However, this storm moved just far enough north that we were stuck on the windy and mainly dry side.

The cold front that followed on its heels did drop temperatures quite a bit during the last weekend of the month. And the clear skies and longer nights allowed for the first widespread, killing freeze of the season. Lows were in the low to mid-20s for many areas by the morning of the 28th. Temperatures were below freezing for several hours that morning, taking many of the tender summer plants with them.

A look ahead

October can be an active weather month for the Tri-Lakes region, with winter conditions often experienced. For three of the last five years, weather around Halloween

has been cold and snowy. Remember the 6 to 15 inches of snow that fell during 2004 from Halloween night through Nov. 1. Snow can be heavy at times during any part of October, as when over 20 inches of snow fell Oct. 9-10 in 2005 and 2006 saw over 24 inches of snow fall in less than 24 hours on Oct. 26. Just last year, nearly 10 inches fell on Oct. 8, so get those snow plows ready. Of course, the weather can also be very dry and mild, so enjoy those days when you can.

September 2013 Weather Statistics

Average High	72.5° (+0.5)
100-year return frequency value max	77.5° min 63.5°
Average Low	45.3° (+5.3)
100-year return frequency value max	46.7° min 36.1°
Monthly Precipitation	3.88" (+2.87")
100-year return frequency value max	4.34" min 0.40"
Monthly Snowfall	0.0" (-0.5")
Highest Temperature	87° on the 6th
Lowest Temperature	24° on the 28th
Season to Date Snow	0.0" (-0.5")
(the snow season is from July 1 to June 30)	
Season to Date Precip.	11.88" (+4.09")
(the precip season is from July 1 to June 30)	
Heating Degree Days	199 (-70)
Cooling Degree Days	16 (+12)

Bill Kappel is a meteorologist and Tri-Lakes resident.
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Letters to Our Community

Guidelines for letters to the editor are on page 31.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in Letters to Our Community should not be interpreted as the view of OCN even if the letter writer is an OCN volunteer.

Fire marshal corrects statement

I would like to apologize for stating that the National Housing and Building Association had been a supporter of the residential sprinkler codes when in fact they do not support these codes. However, many other organizations do support this life safety feature being adopted into local fire codes, such as Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors, Department of Homeland Security, FEMA, Institute for Business and Home Safety, National Association of State Fire Marshals, National Fire Protection Association, International Association of Fire Chiefs, as well as many individual state/province organizations across the United States and Canada.

I apologize for my mistake and any confusion this may have caused our citizens.

Margo L. Humes, CFEI, IAIFIT
Fire marshal, Wescott Fire Department

Homebuilders committed to safety

In response to the recent article regarding outdated fire codes, the Housing and Building Association of Colorado Springs wants to make it clear that the homebuilding industry is dedicated to the safety of the communities in which they build.

Homebuilders have a vested interest in the safety of their products both during the building process and after the new house becomes a home. It's the homebuilder's role to make sure that these proposals are necessary and affordable so buyers are not priced out of the market. An important point for those hoping to afford their own home is that for each \$1,000 added to the price of a home, another 346 potential home buyers in Colorado Springs are forced to remain on the sidelines.

We also wish to correct the notion that our national association, the NAHB, supports a policy contrary to our local position on the mandatory installation of fire sprinklers in residential construction. In fact, the NAHB does not support measures to mandate residential fire sprinklers in single-family construction. However, our industry is prepared to install virtually any option that a homeowner wishes to add to their home, and fully support fire suppression options for homeowners who choose them.

Our association has been consistently engaged in the rebuilding effort after the Waldo Canyon Fire, and now the Black Forest Fire. Our builders work as the advocate for the homeowner, ensuring that the building process works as smoothly as possible, and at the lowest possible cost, so affected homeowners may get back in a home, and back to their normal lives, as soon as possible.

John W. Bissett
2013 HBA President

D-38 criticisms inaccurate

In the September issue of OCN, I read two letters that were critical of Lewis-Palmer District 38. Those letters contained inaccuracies; neither cited a source.

Mr. Steve Boyd wrote a letter that cites a teacher turnover rate at Palmer Ridge High School of 42 percent, "One of the highest on the Front Range."

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) publishes employee turnover statistics by district. Per CDE data, District 38 has one of the lowest turnover rates for teachers (11.9 percent) for any similar-size district in or around El Paso County. In fact, employee retention in any category is competitive. See <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/staffcurrent>. Click on the "Personnel Turnover Rate ..." tab; see line 654 for District 38 data. Personnel turnover in District 38 is not out of line with districts of similar demographics.

Mr. Boyd, a former teacher at Palmer Ridge, also includes a partial quote of an email from the principal's secretary sent to all teachers, and describes it as threatening. The segment of the email that Mr. Boyd quotes is a cut/paste from the contract extension letter sent to all teachers throughout the district. Read in its entirety, the email, which is complete with smiley faces that Mr. Boyd did not include, is pleasant to read. I have known and worked with the secretary Mr. Boyd criticized since 1997; I disagree with Mr. Boyd's characterization of this professional's demeanor.

Mrs. Jody Richardson wrote that our middle school test scores are declining, and used that premise to criticize the district's decision to combine middle schools four years ago.

Her premise is false. In the past three years, Lewis-Palmer Middle School scores have stayed constant (reading and writing) or have trended up (math and science). See https://edx.cde.state.co.us/SchoolView/DataCenter/reports.jsp?_afWindowMode=0&_afLoop=13973192377438413&_adf.ctrl-state=171f2ek1ay_9. On the right, scroll down to Lewis-Palmer School District and open that tab. You can use the graph or column data to make your own comparisons. Mrs. Richardson's criticism of our middle school's testing performance is not supported by this data; the outstanding performance of our students is a direct reflection of the outstanding teachers and educational professionals at Lewis-Palmer Middle School.

Frequent critics of District 38 have every right to express their opinions. However, our community is about to vote on an MLO to support our schools; it is absolutely essential that facts printed in the media be accurate and properly sourced. I appreciate the opportunity to provide a reference for District 38 performance.

John Mann
Treasurer, D-38 Board of Education

Now's the time for the mill levy override?

I have to take exception to this! Approximately 15 years ago, I, a local constituent and business owner since 1991,

approached the Transportation Department and requested the opportunity to show them how we are able to reduce their maintenance costs. They were not interested!

So again around five years ago, I approached the transportation director at the new transportation building to discuss our product and services. I offered to do a no-cost, no-obligation analysis to show that on the average we save customers a minimum of 15 percent and up to 67 percent. It stopped there, since the manager in that department was not interested.

Then D-38 decided to start charging the parents a bus fee, so I contacted Cheryl Wangeman (CFO) with our proposal. I also provided her with references from several businesses and school districts already using this product.

After several months of no response, I presented the above information to the school board at two different board meetings. This was to express my frustration and concern with this situation, since I am a local taxpayer. I also presented documentation from SAE International and test results with Ford Motor Co.—representing fuel economy savings of 6.54 percent. This is yet another savings above what I had earlier proposed. Since I have not been given any specific information from D-38, I can only estimate that this alone would be a savings of around \$38,000 per year.

I was just asking for the opportunity to do this, with no cost and no obligation. If this happened to me, a local taxpayer and businessman, how many other times has this happened? It should be the district's obligation to look at every option to save money!

The time is not now, but was several years ago! I am voting no on the MLO!

Ivan Anthony, Monument

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