

mitigation to the council in hopes of getting the town and the community to thin pine trees and cut down excess Gambel oak to increase defensible space in town. She shared information about two organizations, one that rents goats to landowners wanting to clear out scrub oak, and the State Wildland Inmate Fire Team program that does fuel mitigation with chippers and chainsaws (see www.coloradoci.com/serviceproviders/swift/.)

Town Clerk Tara Berreth said it was unlikely that the town can find the money to pay for fuel mitigation right now since “we are down 10-15 percent on revenue” and the town cannot get involved in private efforts. She sug-

gested Harrington could share information at the library, the post office, and public functions.

Palmer Lake has a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) on file with the state (see www.csfs.colostate.edu). Property owners living in wildland-urban interface areas covered by a CWPP can deduct 50 percent of the cost of wildfire fuels mitigation from their reported federal income up to an amount of \$2,500 (HB13-1012).

New business licenses approved

The council unanimously approved two new business licenses:

- Fuse Salon and Boutique LLC, a hair salon and boutique, is owned by Erika Perry and located beneath The Depot restaurant at 11 Primrose St., Suite C.
- Beautiful & Beloved Boutique LLC has a storefront at 21 Lower Glenway. Owner Amber Newberry will sell products made by survivors of human trafficking who are now learning a trade and starting a new life.

The meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

The next meeting will be at 6 p.m. Nov. 14 in Town Hall, 42 Valley Crescent. Meetings are normally on the second Thursday of the month. Information: 481-2953.

Lisa Hatfield can be reached at lisahatfield@ocn.me.



Above: Resident Judith Harrington shared wildfire fuel mitigation information with the Palmer Lake Town Council on Oct. 10. Those who want to reduce their home’s fire risk or help with the firewise effort in Palmer Lake should contact Harrington at (719) 229-9636. Photo by Lisa Hatfield.

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Tri-Lakes Economic Development Corp. State of the Region, Oct. 2

Efforts to bolster regional economy

By Candice Hitt

Speakers at the Tri-Lakes Economic Development Corp. (TLEDC) annual State of the Region luncheon on Oct. 2 provided a glimpse of efforts to improve the regional economy.

The mission of the TLEDC is to expand the Tri-Lake region’s economic base to achieve sustained growth and prosperity for the local community. The TLEDC works with local and regional stakeholders to identify, recruit, and relocate new businesses to the area as well as help existing entities in expansion efforts.

Board President Mike Law explained the TLEDC’s 2014-15 focus, saying that its efforts have been influenced in part by meetings with local-area businesses and governing bodies such as CodeOne, Synthes, and the towns of Palmer Lake and Monument, to learn what they would like to see in terms of area business development.

The TLEDC is also working to facilitate collaboration among other area stakeholders, including the Colorado Springs Regional Business Alliance, real estate brokers, and local utilities, to ensure that the community as a whole is involved in attracting and keeping primary employers in the Tri-Lakes area.

Economic recovery

Guest speaker Paul Rochette, senior partner with Summit Economics LLC, discussed the U.S. and local economies,

stating that recovery periods following recessions are taking longer. “Consumer confidence is the best indicator of the U.S. economy,” he said, and that indicator is now at about 80 percent. He said this confidence drives economic recovery.

Rochette also said that the best-performing Colorado industries include finance, construction, and manufacturing.

Guest speaker Joe Raso, president and CEO of the Colorado Springs Regional Business Alliance, explained how his organization is working with the TLEDC to create synergy and drive the Pike Peak region’s economy and is meeting with the area’s top businesses to ensure that they flourish and remain local. Raso explained that retaining businesses, from an economic impact standpoint, is more important than bringing in new organizations.

Raso said 60 to 65 percent of the local economy is associated with the aerospace and defense industries.

For more information: www.coloradospringsbusinessalliance.com.

The next regular TLEDC meeting will be held at 7:30 a.m. Nov. 14 at the Fairfield Inn, 15275 Struthers Road, Colorado Springs, 80921. Information: www.trilakesedc.com

Candice Hitt can be reached at candicehitt@ocn.me

El Paso Board of County Commissioners, Oct. 1 and 22

Variance approved for Tri-Lakes business

By Lisa Hatfield

The El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) accepted funds for wildfire mitigation in Fox Run Park and approved a variance of use request for Monument Small Engine Repair.

Fuels mitigation grant appropriated

On Oct. 1, the BOCC unanimously approved a resolution to appropriate \$30,000 in grant money to the county Community Services Department/Parks Division 2013 budget. The funds from the U.S. Department of Natural Resources Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant Program will support wildfire mitigation efforts in Fox Run Regional Park.

Engine shop’s variance of use request approved

At the Oct. 1 El Paso County Planning Commission meeting, David Hellbusch, owner of Monument Small Engine Repair, received a unanimous recommendation for a variance of use to allow the continuance of his small engine repair, retail sales, and vehicle repair business in the Residential Rural (RR-5) zone district. Three conditions and four notations were part of the recommendation to the

BOCC. Planning Commissioner Jerry Hannigan recused himself from this vote. The 3.86-acre property is located at 137 Monument Lake Road, Monument. This parcel is within the Tri-Lakes Small Area Plan.

Then on Oct. 22, the item was unanimously approved as part of the consent agenda of the BOCC.

This parcel and several adjoining parcels, including those west of the railroad but within the town of Monument, were used for the Mountain Farmer Nursery landscape business owned by David Hellbusch’s father Norm Hellbusch, which was started in the 1970s and has since closed. David Hellbusch operated the small engine repair part of the landscape business, but after the landscape business closed, his business didn’t conform with zoning.

The parcel lies in unincorporated El Paso County and is not included in any sanitation district. Hellbusch has been operating his small engine business within the Mountain Farmer property for about 25 years without public water or sanitary sewer service. This business relied solely on a rented portable toilet until a septic system was recently installed.