

## Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, April 12

# Firefighters help district residents with fire mitigation

By Nancy Wilkins

At the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) April 12 meeting, Assistant Fire Chief Scott Ridings said district-wide fire mitigation efforts continue, board member Joyce Hartung was sworn into office, Ridings asked the Insurance Services Office (ISO) to rate more areas, the pension board considered increasing benefits, and 2013 budget amendments were considered.

## Firefighters schedule district "chipping days"

Firefighters continue to work with DWFPD residents to help remove brush and chip wood susceptible to fire. DWFPD's policy is to coordinate five or more district residents living within a short distance from each other who will work together with firefighters as they clear brush and debris. This service is also provided to homeowners in the district who are physically unable to help.

Director John Fredell, who worked alongside the firefighters with fire mitigation efforts earlier this month, praised firefighters' efforts. According to DWFPD, several "chipping days" are planned within the next couple of months, because fire mitigation is more effective when implemented on a community-wide scale. District residents living within a homeowners association (HOA) are encouraged to contact their local HOA to coordinate with DWFPD, learn more about fire mitigation, and schedule future events.

## Hartung sworn into office

Board Chairman Greg Gent gave the oath of office to incumbent Director Joyce Hartung, who returned to the board by acclamation. Hartung has previously served on the board as treasurer.

## Ridings asks ISO to return

After evaluating DWFPD in April, the official report from ISO is expected within six months. ISO can measure how quickly DWFPD can extinguish a building fire

by looking at several factors, such as water availability, building size, and response time. Ridings asked ISO to return to DWFPD and separately rate areas that do not have fire hydrants. The report, used by insurance companies to evaluate homeowner insurance rates, can also be used by fire districts to prioritize future purchases of firefighting equipment.

Ridings also said the district should consider purchasing another water tanker truck.

## Pension board considers increase in benefits

At the first of two meetings of the Fire and Police Pension Association (FPPA) board scheduled for 2014, volunteer firefighter Lt. Bryan Ackerman requested an increase in benefits to eligible retired volunteer firefighters. Ackerman proposed increasing benefits from \$400 to \$500 each month for firefighters vested at 20 years. A firefighter vested for 20 years would see an increase of \$100 per month, and a firefighter vested for 10 years would receive an increase of \$50 per month. Director "Bo" McAllister asked Ackerman to return for the May 20 board meeting with more information.

According to the report provided by Ackerman, the FPPA fund grew by \$75,111 after benefits were paid, and had an ending balance of \$970,980 in December 2013. This was an increase in the closing fund balance from 2012 despite no matching state or employer contributions recorded for 2013.

## Financial report

Fire Chief Vinny Burns presented the financial report for March. As of March 31, the balance for Peoples National Bank was \$49,804; PNP Colorado Peak Fund was \$174,976; Colorado Trust was \$439,393; and Wells Fargo Public Trust \$ 869,137, for a total of 1.5 million.

Year-to-date district expenses at the end of March were under budget at 14.8 percent, compared with a pro-

jected 25 percent.

The board looked at amending the 2013 budget, but tabled the decision for the next meeting pending further review. Several expense items need to be discussed, including vehicle maintenance. DWFPD had consistent problems with aluminum radiators leaking in fire trucks in 2013. Consequently, in expectation of further expenses, the board has increased the budget for vehicular maintenance in 2014.

## Tracking response time by the minute

A new monthly report presented to the board tracks firefighter response time within minutes of arrival and analyzes response times within different areas of the district. For example, the report shows DWFPD responding to five calls in the Gleneagle area within four minutes, eight calls in the Flying Horse area in under five minutes, and six calls in the Flying Horse area in under six minutes. Collectively, the information can be used for training and community awareness.

There were 173 calls recorded in March, compared to 194 calls in March 2013, an 11 percent decrease.

## Other matters

The board voted unanimously to enter executive session, and board Chairman Greg Gent cited a Colorado Revised Statute for "determining positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations, developing strategy for negotiations, and instructing negotiators."

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m., immediately after the executive succession ended, with no public announcements made.

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The next meeting is scheduled for May 20 at Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Drive. Meetings are normally held on the third Tuesday of the month. The pension board is scheduled to reassemble at 7 p.m. May 20. Please call 488-8680, a non-emergency number, for more information.

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## April Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

Overall a pretty "normal" month around the region, with temperatures less than 1/2°F less than normal and precipitation just a little below normal. But, just because the temperatures and precipitation were right at normal for the month doesn't mean we didn't see plenty of active weather.

You got to love April on Monument Hill, 70's one day and snow the next. The month started off cooler than normal, with a nice spring snow storm dropping 6-10 inches of snow from late on the 2nd through early afternoon of the 3rd. Temperatures dropped from the mid and upper 50's ahead of the storm to the low 30's on the 3rd. The melting snow over the next couple of days also helped to keep temperatures cooler than normal, as much of the sun's energy was used to melt the snow instead of heating up the air. This held high temperatures to the low and mid 40's on the 4th and 5th. Another quick moving cold front came through last on the 6th through the morning of the 7th and made for some slick roads as 1-2 inches of snow fell. By afternoon it was hard to tell anything had happened, as the stronger April sunshine helped to melt most

of the snow. High pressure settled in behind this storm and brought some very spring-like temperatures to the region. Highs reached into the 60's and 70's from the 8th through the 12th, with plenty of sunshine. Some of the first owners started to poke through as well during the warm spell. However, the next powerful storms was already taking shape, with one piece moving in from the southwest and another from the north. These combined to produce a good show of snow and wind on the 13th. In addition, the air mass was very cold for mid April, and held temperatures below freezing most of the day on the 13th.

Cold and some snow to start off the week of the 14th, as two storms moved through over the first few days. High temperatures were held in the mid to upper 30's on the 14th. Temperatures warmed quickly the next afternoon reaching the upper 50's. This combined with the strong April sunshine to quickly melt the snow and of course add some much needed moisture to the soil. Another storm system moved through from the 16th to the 17th. This produced wet snow starting during the mid afternoon of the 16th and continued to the early morning hours of the 17th. Most areas above 7,000 feet accumulated 2-4 inches of new snowfall. Again, sunshine quickly returned and melted the snow the day. This again added much appreciated moisture to the soil to help our newly growing plants. High temperatures reached into the upper 60's and low 70's on the afternoon of the 18th. Highs cooled slightly the next couple of days, with a few scattered showers developing during the afternoons of the 19th and 20th. This was associated with unsettled conditions which moved through the region, this time associated with a much warmer air mass. Therefore, snow levels were much higher and only rainfall fell on the Palmer Divide.

The third week of April started off around normal with high temperature reaching the low 60's on the 21st. The day started off quiet and sunny, then cloudy conditions developed by afternoon with a brief rain shower. The next day was even warmer, with highs reaching the low to mid 70's and again brief afternoon showers developing. More active weather began to affect the region the next day, with mild and windy conditions developing ahead of an approaching storm. Rain shower and our first thunderstorms of the season developed that afternoon. A

cold front then moved through that evening, producing around a half inch of snowfall. Colder temperatures stuck around on the 24th, with highs only reaching the upper 50's and low 60's. Warmer weather returned over the next two days, as highs reached the upper 60's and low 70's. However, another powerful storms was moving into the region and began to affect the Palmer Divide early in the morning on the 27th. This brought wind and another round of heavy, wet snow. Unfortunately, the moisture with this storm quickly moved off to the east, leaving us with cold and windy conditions as high temperatures remained in the 30's that afternoon.

Cool and unsettled conditions returned for the end of the month, as the departing storm from the 27th stalled just to our east. This allowed a cold, northerly low to take hold of the region through the 30th. Winds were very gusty as the pressure gradient was very tight between this deep low pressure to our east/northeast and high pressure to our west. Winds gusted to over 60mph at times. In addition, temperatures were 15-20 degrees below normal, making it feel more than February than April. Areas of clouds also formed each afternoon, with brief snow showers developing, especially along and west of I-25. The heaviest band of snow showers accumulated just over two inches of wind driven snow on the evening of the 29th to the early morning of the 30th.

## A Look Ahead

May often experiences a wide variety of weather conditions in the region from warm, sunny days to severe thunderstorms and hail, and even some snowfall. May 2007 was a snowy May, with over 20 inches accumulating for the month, with the last couple of years seeing about average with just a few inches. However, we can usually expect warmer conditions to finally settle in, with temperatures reaching above 80°F on several afternoon.

## April 2014 Weather Statistics

Average High	57.1° (+0.1°)
Average Low	26.4° (-1.2°)
Highest Temperature	74° on the 22 <sup>nd</sup>
Lowest Temperature	10° on the 4 <sup>th</sup>
Monthly Precipitation	2.20"
	(-0.89", 30% below normal)
Monthly Snowfall	23.8"

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