

Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO), May 10

Fire marshal urges homeowners groups to embrace Firewise



Above: Fire Marshal John Vincent encouraged all HOAs to register on www.firewise.org to work toward being a Firewise community, involving homeowners in taking individual responsibility for preparing their homes from the risk of wildfire. Contact Vincent at jvincent@tlmfire.org with any questions. *Photo by Robert L. Swedenburg.*

By Robert L. Swedenburg
John Vincent, fire marshal for the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD), challenged homeowners associations (HOAs) to achieve Firewise designations. Speaking at the May 10 meeting of the Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO), he told HOA representatives they can do it, and he will help.

Firewise is a project of the National Fire Protection Association. The Firewise Communities Program encourages local solutions for safety by involving homeowners in taking individual responsibility for protecting their homes from the risk of wildfire.

Vincent said he has been working on a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) for the TLMFPD.

The TLMFPD is bordered by Baptist Road to the south, County Line Road to the north,

and Black Forest Road to the east. The district covers about 60 square miles and has about 24,000 residents. This CWPP will help HOAs in the pursuit of their Firewise status by providing needed data, and will support HOAs' efforts to apply for monetary grants to help achieve Firewise status.

HOAs can use El Paso County's CWPP in support of grant requests, but the county's CWPP does not include enough detail for individual HOAs, Vincent said. The TLMFPD's CWPP will address specific fire fuel sources and other particular information within individual HOA boundaries, and thus will be more detailed and more useful than the county's CWPP.

Vincent requested that all HOAs in the TLMFPD contact him as soon as possible and provide the boundaries of their HOA. He can be contacted at 719-484-0911 or JVincent@tri-lakesfire.com.

HOA representatives also can stop by the fire station and office at 166 Second St. in Monument. He plans to complete the first draft of the Tri-Lakes CWPP by December.

Vincent showed the NEPCO members a Firewise Starter Kit. It can be obtained at www.firewise.org. He also showed the audience a reflective home address plate, which can be bought locally, to help firefighters find houses easier. Vincent described the "Ready-Set-Go" process for evacuation planning, and he counselled all residents to check their fire insurance policies very carefully.

The next meeting of NEPCO is scheduled for 10 a.m. Saturday, July 12 at the Monument Town Hall. NEPCO can be visited at www.NEPCO.org.

Robert L. Swedenburg is secretary of NEPCO.

Woodmoor Improvement Association Board of Directors, May 28

Great American Cleanup on June 7; Firewise event June 21

By Jackie Burhans

At the May 28 meeting of the Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) board, Manager Matt Beseau said the Great American Cleanup event will be held June 7. Residents are asked to clean streets and common areas from 9 a.m. to noon. The WIA will supply bags and vests and will provide a barbecue lunch for volunteers afterward.

The absences of Treasurer Tom Schoemaker and Secretary Jeff Gerhart were excused.

The board changed the next slash removal date to June 14. President Jim Hale said the Highway Advisory Commission told him that work will be done on County Line Road between I-25 and Furrow Road starting on June 1 and continuing through the end of the year.

Forestry Director Eric Gross and Beseau attended a Community Associations Institute (CAI) meeting called "Nature's Wrath" and obtained information for the upcoming Firewise community event on June 21 at

The Barn. This year's theme will be "Protecting Your Home from Embers."

Vice President Kirstin Reimann has been working with Beseau on updating the employee handbook. They will finalize handbook changes and submit them for review and advice.

Beseau reported that the La Plata group, which has purchased a lot of property in the area, is interested in the property just north of the Barn. He has been working with Gerhart on the website, and they expect to remove old items

within two weeks as well as send out a new template to review. Beseau will attend a law seminar at CAI next week to learn about updated homeowners association legislation.

Per Suhr, director of Woodmoor Public Safety (WPS), reported on service calls and noted that WPS has treated WIA ponds for mosquitoes with a larvicide.

WPS Chief Kevin Nielsen is taking the old Jeep in to remove equipment in preparation for selling it via Craigslist. Nielsen received board approval to sell the old Jeep at an agreed upon price range.

The board discussed recent incidents of outgoing mail theft. Nielson noted the increase in mail theft may be related to graduation gift cards. The board suggested that residents not place outgoing mail in mailboxes but take it to the post office or consider a post office box. They also discussed the feasibility of community mailboxes but expressed concern about residence acceptance and noted that individual mailboxes are useful for directing responders to the correct house.

Darren Rouse, director of Architectural Control, noted that it is the busy season but the system is working—the Architectural Control Committee administrator is able to approve the majority of projects that are routine.

Gross said that due to the DIY fire mitigation meetings, the number of new evaluation requests has increased. He indicated that WIA had received a \$30,000 fuels reduction grant on May 5 from the Colorado Department of Natural Resources

(DNR). He indicated that grants are harder to get and come with more stringent requirements for monitoring. He has been working with the DNR and the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute to understand the new requirements and do pretreatment baseline data collection.

Gross noted that all planned common area mitigation work has been completed. This includes scrub oak and dead tree removal. The first of six slash removal dates was held on May 19 and was well attended, with 182 loads totaling 461 cubic yards. Slash removal is open to all Tri-Lakes communities, but 60 percent of the loads were from Woodmoor. WIA has budgeted for three or four events but will need other HOAs to participate to sustain all six slash removal dates.

Nielsen indicated that WPS will be more active in addressing off-driveway parking to prevent grass fires. The board approved updated patrol, safety and coyote/wildlife plans. The wildlife plan will be posted on the website. The board also approved the 990 tax return at the request of Schoemaker.

The WIA Board of Directors meets at 7 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month in the association's Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Drive. The next meeting will be on June 25.

Official minutes of the WIA board meetings can be found at <http://www.woodmoor.org/content/admin-bod-meeting-minutes.html> after they have been approved by the board.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

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