

bald tires on the brush truck. She asked for support for daily 24-hour staffing, including on Christmas, to guarantee quick responses to fire and medical emergencies with qualified structure firefighters and EMT support. She would like to send the volunteers on deployments that bring in revenue for use of the brush truck and provide pay and experience.

Committee member Bill Fisher detailed the first four options noted on the survey, including the need for wider truck bays, a storage/gear room, a laundry room with a washer-extractor, offices, and secure storage for medical supplies. The facility needs a day room with kitchen/

dining/living room space, a training classroom, a bunk room and separate bathrooms for men and women, he said.

The building needs an estimated 4,800 square feet, Fisher said, and group members have worked with contractors to come up with an estimated cost of \$190 per square foot. To build a public safety building to include the Police Department would add an additional 2,500 square feet.

Community comments

Resident feedback included comments, questions, and responses from the committee on the following topics:

- A Letter of Agreement with the Tri-

- Lakes and Larkspur fire departments.
- Concerns about response time from Tri-Lakes.
- Impact on Insurance Service Organization fire department ratings.
- Impact on homeowner insurance rates.
- Concern over tax increases especially for those on a fixed income.
- Adequacy of operational funding.
- Availability of water.
- Length of bond and the cost of each option.

Committee members addressed these questions. Residents expressed both concern and support for increasing taxes.

Several speakers gave testimonials on service they have received from the PLVFD. Judith Harrington thanked the volunteers on the committee and encouraged others to volunteer and help them.

Kuehster invited attendees to visit the PLVFD station. The committee needs to decide by July 22 which option, if any, to put on the November ballot and will have another community meeting on Saturday, July 12 at Town Hall.

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

Donald Wescott Fire Department District, June 17

2013 audit given clean bill of health

By Nancy Wilkins

At the June 17 Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) board meeting, Thomas Sistare of Hoelting & Co. said the 2013 audit received an “unmodified” or “clean” opinion.

Directors Joyce Hartung, John Fredell, and Fire Chief Vinny Burns were excused from the meeting.

The 2013 audit for the general fund shows a net increase of \$24,991 being added to the fund balance. The total ending balance for the general fund, after adding \$24,991, is recorded as \$1,292 for Dec. 31. The auditing process performed by Hoelting & Co. includes the use of DWFPD’s 2013 budget previously submitted to Colorado’s Department of Local Government.

According to the 2013 audit, DWFPD received a \$6,000 grant from the El Pomar

Foundation. With these funds, DWFPD purchased wildland firefighting supplies; tents, shelter packs, protective gear, and hose to replace equipment used in fighting six wildland fires in Colorado and surrounding states.

Sistare’s suggestions for DWFPD include establishing a budget and trial balance for the volunteer firefighters’ pension fund and making these reports routinely available. Sistare said ideally separate financial statements should be produced for the volunteer firefighters pension fund.

The 2013 audit was accepted by the board by unanimous vote. It contains an invitation on page “v” for district residents to contact Fire Chief Vinny Burns if there are any questions.

May 2014 financial report

Administrative Assistant Stacy Popovich said that as of May 31 the district’s

bank balances amounted to: Peoples National Bank \$46,948, PNP Colorado Peak Fund \$108,012, Colorado Trust \$439,389, and Wells Fargo Public trust \$971,980, for a total of 1.6 million.

Expenses from Jan. 1 through May 14 amounted to \$795,712, or 25.92 percent of the annual budgeted amount. General property tax revenues received through May 14 amounted to \$1 million.

Chief’s report

DWFPD received 184 emergency-related calls in May. Ninety calls were for emergency medical assistance. Total calls were up 5 percent compared to 176 calls in May 2013.

For upcoming July 4 events, DWFPD will be in the Monument parade and at the Black Forest fireworks. Assistant Chief Scott Ridings referred to the unincorporated El Paso County fire ban ordinance

02-02 restricting open fires and limiting fireworks. This ordinance can be viewed at <http://car.elpasoco.com/clerktotheboard/Documents/022.pdf>.

Ridings also said DWFPD is still offering a wood chipping service to district residents to help with fire mitigation.

The meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

The DWFPD board meets at 7 p.m. every third Tuesday of the month at 15415 Gleneagle Dr. The next scheduled meeting is July 15. Please call 488-8680, a non-emergency number, or visit www.wescottfire.org for more information.

Nancy Wilkins can be reached at nancywilkins@ocn.me.

PLHS gives presentation on fires, Revolutionary War

By Tom VanWormer

John Putnam answered the horrible question of “My House Was Destroyed in the Fire— Now What?” on June 10, telling those at the Palmer Lake Historical Society-sponsored meeting about the organizations set up in El Paso County to assist homeowners. (See article below)

At the regular Historical Society meeting on June 19, Brent Brown displayed his original and, in some cases,

reproduction firearms and edged weapons as he introduced the audience to the Dragoons and Cavalry units of the Revolutionary War. Audience members brought their own collections of firearms from the period. Brown later visited the Vaile Museum where he identified all of the swords and edged weapons for use in descriptions of the society’s collection.

The society also celebrated Fathers’ Day on June 15 with its traditional Ice

Cream Social—an afternoon of music and free Rock House Ice Cream on the Village Green.

On July 17 at 7 p.m., Mel McFarland will present “Stories You May Not Have Heard” at the Palmer Lake Town Hill, as this famed author and storyteller returns for another evening of great tales of the Pikes Peak Region.

From 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. July 19, the society will join hands and heart with One

Nation Walking Together for the Annual Colorado Springs Native American Inter-Tribal Powwow at the Freedom Financial Services Expo Center, 3650 N. Nevada Ave. in the Springs. Adults pay a \$2 fee, and Native Americans in full regalia and all kids are admitted free.

Tom VanWormer can be contacted at editor@ocn.me

My house is on fire; now what?

By John Putnam

Based upon the recent lessons learned from the Waldo Canyon and Black Forest wildfires, folks living in or near the wildland urban interface (WUI) should take certain steps now to prepare for the potential of a wildfire. John Putnam presented these steps at a June 10 meeting sponsored by the Palmer Lake Historical Society.

Just like life’s many endeavors, a good offense is a good defense, Putnam said. With the increased probability of wildfire in Colorado’s WUI, he offered three suggestions for strong offense in preparing for a possible wildfire.

First, and most critical, it is essential that your insurance program provides adequate coverage to assist with any (wildfire or other covered) post-loss recoveries. The cornerstone of your insurance planning is to make certain your dwelling coverage is sufficient to replace/rebuild your home as it currently exists—original costs plus any added upgrades. Homeowners should

not just rely on what their insurance companies suggest but be actively engaged in coming up with this estimated cost and then insure for that figure. Once the correct Coverage A has been established, homeowners should assess with their agent or insurance company the following additional coverage:

- Does your policy include at least a 20 percent extended replacement cost endorsement to cover for increased building cost following a catastrophe?
- Does your policy include law and ordinance (building code) coverage to ensure that you have enough money to pay for increased code compliance?
- Does your policy provide sufficient protection for your contents and especially valuable items such as antiques, collections, and fine arts?
- Does your policy provide additional living expenses for at least two

years?

- Do you need added protection for a home business?

Clearly, it is important to have a seasoned insurance professional help you navigate through these important insurance questions.

Secondly, good insurance and disaster preparedness practices suggest certain activities to minimize the impacts of any potential wildfire losses. One of the more stressful activities following a wildfire loss is preparing an inventory of your personal property. Best practices suggest making this list before purchasing insurance protection so you know how much coverage to purchase and to facilitate any post-loss recovery. There are many methods for preparing these lists, but they are an essential part of each homeowner’s preparedness regardless of whether you live in the WUI.

If you do live in the WUI, you should consult with your local fire department to

develop a plan of vegetation mitigation and structure hardening that will assist them in defending your home if a wildfire occurs. You should develop and practice an evacuation plan to “get out” if a natural catastrophe occurs and make sure this includes scenarios for all family members wherever they might be when a loss occurs. Finally, some thought should be given to identifying/preparing the documents and items that you will evacuate on a moment’s notice if a catastrophe should occur, which may include either backing up valuable items/photographs prior to any disaster.

Finally, both wildfires suggest the importance of “community” in the post-disaster environment. While each survivor must oversee his or her own recovery, the collective activity of a neighborhood or community will greatly accelerate a post-disaster recovery. In both local wildfires, community connections were developed after the disaster rather than before. For