

gram to coordinate multiple first responder agencies in the event of a blizzard.

The county needs members of the general public to support this exercise by volunteering to be among 131 volunteers needed to run the blizzard scenario, which is designed to "overload the system." The volunteer "stranded motorists" will be given scripts and instructions to follow on Jan. 9 so first responders can "rescue" them. Volunteering would be great way to earn community service hours. Anyone who is interested should write to Andre at ep@

tlumc.org or call Lisa at 719-339-7831 as soon as possible so that organizers know they have enough volunteers.

Santa on Patrol needs new, unwrapped toys by Dec. 18

President Jake Shirk, who is also chief of the Monument Police Department, requested citizen donations of unwrapped toys and gift cards, suitable for babies through age 15, by Dec. 18. People can drop gifts off at the Monument Police Department, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., or at TLMFD stations 1, 2, and 3. The Police and Fire Depart-

ment elves will deliver the gifts on Dec. 19. For more information, contact Chief Shirk, 481-3253.

The meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.

Meetings are usually held the fourth Wednesday of each month, however, the next TLMFPD meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 8 in the Monument Town Hall at 645 Beacon Lite Road. For information, contact Jennifer Martin at 719-484-0911.

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

Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO), Nov. 14

County commissioner discusses local economics

By Larry Oliver, NEPCO President

Darryl Glenn, El Paso County commissioner, spoke to attendees on the subject of economics and transportation at the Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO) general membership meeting, held at the Monument City Hall on Nov. 14.

Glenn introduced El Paso County Engineer Andre Bracken, whom the commissioner asked to accompany him to talk about transportation and road issues. Glenn used charts to accompany his presentation, and provided copies to all attendees. Copies of the charts will be placed on the NEPCO website (www.NEPCO.org).

Topics included:

- Regional Economic Forecast
- 2016 County Budget Overview
- Northern El Paso County Transportation Projects for 2016
- Air Force Academy Santa Fe Trail Update
- Military Update

According to Commissioner Glenn's charts, the regional unemployment rates comparison of seven cities and 10 counties showed Colorado Springs and El Paso County ranging from 9.3 percent in 2010 to 4.5 percent in 2015. This was higher than statewide unemployment rates during that period. Also, 2015 home sales increased over 2014 in the Pikes Peak Region in each of the first six months as indicated on a chart.

Statistics on the regional economy show that the health care and social assistance, educational services, arts and entertainment, and recreation industries were the areas showing the most growth. Industry jobs leaving the region included manufacturing, information, and wholesale trade.

The top economic driver in the state is the military. Glenn showed that locally, the total defense impact, in-

cluding all industry, indirect and induced impacts exceeds \$13 billion. This is roughly 45 percent of the local economy.

Statewide, the total defense impact is \$27 billion, making it the third-largest industry sector in Colorado. The military accounts for jobs in almost every single county in the state. The total economic impact of just the military facilities is as follows:

- FY 2011 \$5.929 billion
- FY 2012 \$5.307 billion
- FY 2013 \$5.307 billion
- FY 2014 \$5.852 billion

Glenn presented key dates regarding the 2016 county budget as follows

- Month of November—series of budget hearings and department reports.
- Nov. 17—citizen comments, board direction.
- Dec. 8—possible adoption of 2016 original adopted budget.

Glenn also stated that El Paso County is the lowest of the 10 comparable counties for 2015 property tax per citizen, local tax cost per citizen, and for 2014 vs. 2015 sales and use tax collections.

Bracken briefed the audience on the following ongoing county transportation and improvement projects:

- County Line Road
- Lake Woodmoor Drive
- Baptist Road (West)
- Gleneagle Transportation Enhancement Project
- Black Forest Culverts
- Highway 105: I-25 to SH 83
- Monument Hill Road
- Beacon Lite Road
- Northgate/Struthers Drainage Improvements

- Gleneagle/Struthers Roundabout
- Proposed Paving Projects (Group A & Group B)
- Proposed Chip Seal Roads

NEPCO's mission is to promote communication and interaction among homeowners associations (HOAs) of northern El Paso County in order to exchange ideas on topics of common interest and to develop collective responses to the county on issues affecting the quality of life of NEPCO member associations.

All formal and informal HOAs in northern El Paso County are invited to join NEPCO and should call Bob Swedenburg at 481-2723 or see www.nepco.org.

November Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

Despite a warm start to the month, including some daily record highs on the 1st and 2nd, cold and unsettled weather was the main story from about the 10th onward. This resulted in the monthly average temperatures to come in about 2°F cooler than normal. The active and snowy pattern that set up starting during the second week of the month and continued off and on until the end of the month resulted in snowfall more than three times the normal amount, making up for the dry September and October.

We were still waiting for our first taste of winter to arrive during the first week of November, as high temperatures reached into the mid- to upper 60s from the 1st through the 3rd. In fact, several record highs were set on the 1st and 2nd all along the Front Range. A cold front did finally push in late on the 4th, with low clouds, fog, drizzle, and a few flurries on the 5th. High temperatures were held in the low 40s that afternoon and upper 30s on the 6th, finally producing values cooler than normal. Low temperatures also fell to the low 20s, providing for our first widespread, hard freeze across the area.

Finally a taste of winter visited the region during the week of the 9th, but not before more mild and dry weather. Highs hit the mid- to upper 50s on the 9th and 10th. Then a quick moving, yet strong storm began to make its presence felt just before midnight on the 10th, with a cold front and snow flurries. Snow picked up overnight and combined with strong winds to create some hazardous conditions on Veterans Day morning. Between 4 and 6 inches of snow accumulated and was blown around into some pretty big drifts. However, by mid-morning skies were already clearing as the storm moved out of the region. Temperatures managed to reach the upper 30s that afternoon and low

40s on the 12th.

Then seasonal conditions under sunny skies moved back in for the rest of the week and into the weekend, melting most of the snow as highs reached back into the low to mid-50s on the 14th and 15th. However, this quiet,

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