

Baptist Road Rural Transportation Authority, Jan. 16

# Road use fee collection suspended

By Jim Kendrick

On Jan. 16, the board of the Baptist Road Rural Transportation Authority (BRRTA) unanimously suspended collection of its road use fee for now even though it was BRRTA's main source of operating revenue, other than interest on savings accounts. The BRRTA road use fee had become a form of dual taxation on development after El Paso County imposed its own county-wide traffic impact fee two years ago. Developers and the Town of Monument had complained to the county that simultaneous imposition of two separate road use impact fees was slowing down commercial and residential development. The suspension of the impact fee is retroactive to Dec. 18, 2014.

The BRRTA board consists of two elected officials of the Town of Monument and three elected El Paso County officials. The current members are Monument Mayor Pro

Tem Jeff Kaiser (chair), Monument Mayor Rafael Dominguez, County Commissioners Darryl Glenn and Dennis Hisey, and County Assessor Steve Schleiker. This was the first BRRTA meeting for Schleiker, replacing former Clerk and Recorder Wayne Williams, who was elected to become the Colorado secretary of state on Nov. 4.

BRRTA CPA Carrie Bartow filled in for BRRTA District Manager Denise Denslow (both work for CliftonLarsonAllen LLP). Henceforth, the El Paso County staff will serve as BRRTA's administrative staff at no cost to BRRTA's taxpayers, in return for BRRTA giving up its road use fee revenue stream to induce more rapid development of the Baptist Road corridor. However, the temporary BRRTA one-cent sales tax must remain in place to pay off the principal and interest on the privately held bonds that financed construction of the state's I-25 Baptist

Road Intersection (Exit 158) when it became apparent that the state would have no road construction funds available for this project for decades. The taxpayers of BRRTA approved the temporary sales tax for 20 years to pay off the bonds issued to finance construction of the interchange.

See <http://ocn.me/v6n12.htm#brrta> and <http://ocn.me/v7n6.htm#brrta> for more information.

The meeting adjourned at 2:43 p.m.

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The next meeting will be held on at 2:30 p.m. on May 8 at Monument Town Hall, 645 Beacon Lite Road. Meetings are normally held on the second Friday of the second month of the quarter. Information: 884-8017.

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Board of County Commissioners, Jan. 15

# County open burning ordinance approved

By Allison Colburn

On Jan. 15, the El Paso County Board of County Commissioners gave final approval to an open burning ordinance designed to protect the safety of county citizens and prevent wildfires. A request for such an ordinance was made earlier this year by Black Forest residents who were concerned when they saw large piles of slash and debris being burned near their homes. After the devastating Black Forest Fire, the burning brought up fears that another fire could be recklessly ignited.

The ordinance, effective now, places emphasis on vegetation management burning—fires intentionally used for grassland or forest management. Anyone who wishes to conduct vegetation management burning must obtain an open burning air quality permit from the county Health Department in addition to an open burning permit from the

Sheriff's Office. When an open burning air quality permit is obtained, the Health Department will automatically send a request to the Sheriff's Office, reducing the time it takes to obtain the permit. The open burning permit will then be sent electronically or by first class mail.

Open burns must also comply with all state and local fire district rules and regulations. They must be directly attended by a competent person with appropriate extinguishing equipment and they must be at least 50 feet away from any buildings or combustible fences. Those with an open burning permit should notify their neighbors and call the Sheriff's Office at 719-390-5555 when they decide on a date and time to conduct the burn. The permit can be revoked at any time.

Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District Chief Bryan Jack attended the Jan. 15 BOCC meeting and

acknowledged his and the Black Forest district's support for the ordinance. He added, "In looking through the ordinance, it strikes a nice balance between several government entities. It hasn't precluded anyone, everyone has a say, and we're still protecting personal and private property rights."

Commissioner Littleton was optimistic about El Paso County's ability to combat fires. In the meeting, she mentioned that the county now has aircraft available that can be dispatched within 20 minutes, has infrared capabilities, and can see through smoke at 5,000 feet.

The full ordinance may be found online at <http://news.elpasoco.com/Documents/EPC%20Open%20Burning%20Ordinance.pdf>.

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NEPCO, Jan. 10

# County assessor discusses office's activities

By Larry Oliver (NEPCO president)

A discussion of county assessment activities highlighted El Paso County Assessor Steve Schleiker's presentation at the Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO) general membership meeting on Jan. 10.

Schleiker, an El Paso County resident since 1975, said his staff totals 51 personnel, including 48 full-time and three part-time employees. He has 20 appraisers that handle residential, commercial, vacant land, agriculture, and business personal property. This encompasses over 265,000 parcels. 2013 was used as an example of property values. At that time, the market value of taxable and exempt property in the county was \$60.50 billion, and the assessed value was \$6.33 billion.

Schleiker also said that his staff is working on the 2015 reappraisal and is currently studying sales that occurred from July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2014, which includes a study of 20 Economic Areas (EA) in the county. This included:

- EA1 (Security, Widefield, Fountain)
- EA2 (Skyway, Ivywild, Broadmoor, Cheyenne Hills, Stratton Meadows)
- EA3 (Stratton Meadows, Park Hill)
- EA4 (Eastborough, Valley Hi, Pikes Peak Park, Southborough)
- EA5 (Pleasant Valley, Mesa, Westside, Midland, Crystal Park, Bear Creek Park, Manitou Springs, Garden of the Gods, Cedar Heights, Cascade, Chipita Park, Green Mountain Falls, Ute Pass)

Real property sales in the study areas during this period totaled 26,339, including:

- 15,537 single-family residence sales
- 1,168 condo sales
- 2,059 townhome sales
- 6,813 vacant land sales

- 762 commercial sales countywide
- Schleiker's office is still working on the 2015 reappraisal. However, on a countywide average it is initially seeing slight increases to property values.

Schleiker also provided important County Assessor's Office dates. These included:

- May 1: Real Property Notices of Value mailed to all property owners and the start of real property appeals.
- June 1: Deadline for property owner to submit real property appeal to his office.
- June 15: Personal Property/Oil and Gas/Drilling Rig Notices of Value mailed.
- June 30: Deadline for property owner to submit personal property appeal to his office.
- July 1: Deadline for his office to mail Notice of Determinations on real property to property owners who have appealed.
- July 10: Start of County Board of Equalization (Real and Personal Property) deadline to mail Notice of Determinations on Personal Property/Oil and Gas/Drilling Rigs
- July 20: Deadline for property owners to file to County Board of Equalization
- Aug. 5: County Board of Equalization (CBOE) concludes hearings no later than 30 days after CBOE decision—appeals from CBOE decisions must

be filed with BAA, District Court, or BOCC for binding arbitration.

The next NEPCO meeting will be the second Saturday in March. □

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