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Volunteers reporting on community issues in Monument, Palmer Lake, and the surrounding Tri-Lakes area

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Issue #239 — Volume 21 Number 1 — Saturday, January 2, 2021

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## Polar Express display given permanent home in Colorado Springs museum



The Pikes Peak Historical Street Railway Foundation in Colorado Springs has created a permanent display for the long-time Coleman family Polar Express model train display that was a Town of Palmer Lake Christmas tradition (see archive photo above from 2010 [www.ocn.me/v11n1.htm#pe](http://www.ocn.me/v11n1.htm#pe)). This tradition started during the 2006 Christmas holiday. It was created by former Palmer Lake Town Councilman Gary Coleman and his son Travis.

The new home for this display is the Pikes Peak Trolley Museum at 2333 Steel Dr., Colorado Springs, CO 80907 (719-475-9508). Connie Balcerovich, Travis' sister, arranged for the donation to the museum with a formal ceremony attended by Travis on Nov. 23, 2020. Gary Coleman died in 2016 ending Palmer Lake's 10-year town tradition, but the display is now restored and available to the public year-round. "Now they can actually see it, physically. We have re-created what happens in the movie," said Balcerovich, referring to the 2004 animated film, "The Polar Express."

For more information, visit [coloradospringstrolleys.com](http://coloradospringstrolleys.com) or [gazette.com/life-polar-express-model-train-replica-finds-permanent-home-in-colorado-springs/video\\_8b2c2281-870d-55a8-8914-6d29eefd461e.html](http://gazette.com/life-polar-express-model-train-replica-finds-permanent-home-in-colorado-springs/video_8b2c2281-870d-55a8-8914-6d29eefd461e.html).

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## Circulation

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## Santa on Patrol



**Above:** Santa took time from his work at the North Pole to visit the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District on Dec. 12. Because his work on Christmas Eve is so important, he kept socially distant from families wishing to visit with him. *Photo courtesy of Donald Wescott Fire Protection District.* Fire district coverage starts on page 17.

Monument Board of Trustees, Dec. 7

## Board suggests town become pandemic sanctuary city; budget approved

By Allison Robenstein

During the Dec. 7 Monument Board of Trustees (BOT) meeting, the board agreed to research creation of a resolution approving the town as a COVID-19 sanctuary city. They also approved the 2021 budget.

Trustees Laurie Clark and Jamy Unruh were noted absent. This is the third year Clark has missed the annual budget approval vote.

### Possible resolution for COVID-19 sanctuary city

During board comments, Trustee Ron Stephens asked, "What would this board think of declaring Monument a COVID-19 sanctuary city?" He suggested a resolution be drawn up that would prevent local businesses from being reported for failing to follow state pandemic requirements. His question came after three board members commented on the state's pandemic response and its negative effects on local businesses and the economy.

Trustee Jim Romanello expressed concerns about the closure of local businesses and religious services. He said, "Open your businesses, go to church, go to temple, stand and if necessary, fight for what is right." Trustee Mitch LaKind said, "I call on the businesses to ignore the red [se-

vere risk level], and open and sustain their life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness."

Mayor Pro Tem Kelly Elliott appeared to break down while asking state government officials to, "allow us to use our best judgment ... so we can keep businesses open for their livelihood for the good of the country. This control is absolutely absurd."

Mayor Don Wilson's main concern with the legislation is that the board's actions may cause individual businesses harm. "I'd like to hear from some of our business owners," he said.

Town Attorney Andrew Richey said the El Paso County Health Department has legal authority to enforce pandemic requirements, but he could not say for sure if Health Department officials could be removed from local businesses for doing their job. This was in response to the board wondering if local businesses could legally site local health officials for trespassing as they enforce COVID-19 restrictions.

Treasurer Rosa Ooms cautioned the board to ensure businesses would not be required to repay any of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, Economic Security Act (CARES) Act funding

Lewis-Palmer District 38 Board  
of Education, Dec. 14

## Board discusses plans for second semester, approves contract for energy audit

By Harriet Halbig

Members of the Board of Education of Lewis-Palmer District 38 discussed reopening schools for in-person learning, approved an energy audit, and proposed implementation of Goal 3 of the strategic plan regarding professional learning at their Dec. 14 meeting.

Six community members submitted comments. All said that distance learning was not sufficient and that their students were suffering mental health effects from being isolated from their teachers and peers. They urged the district to reopen the secondary schools five days a week at the beginning of the second semester. One individual recommended increased compensation for substitute teachers, and another said the district should ask the opinions of the community.


Board Vice President Theresa Phillips said that she, board President Chris Taylor, and Superintendent KC Somers met recently with

MONUMENT (Cont. on 2)

D38 BOE (Cont. on 8)



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**MONUMENT (Cont. from 1)**

they received this year as a result of such a resolution. See OCN Vol. 20 No. 6 - June 6, 2020 ([www.ocn.me/v20n6.htm#mbot0518](http://www.ocn.me/v20n6.htm#mbot0518) and [www.ocn.me/v20n6.htm#mbot0527](http://www.ocn.me/v20n6.htm#mbot0527)). Town Manager Mike Foreman said he would review the agreement the town signed with the county to receive the funding.

**2021 budget approved**

Ooms and Foreman have been holding monthly budget workshops with the board for several months to flesh out the 2021 budget and discuss any issues. Each department has specific needs to meet plus supplemental requests. A copy of the draft 2021 budget may be found at <https://tinyurl.com/y37wqnhc>. Some items to note in the 2021 budget include:

- Employees will receive a 5%

cost-of-living salary adjustment. Medical benefits will be through Kaiser once again, with a 1.4% decrease in premiums. There is no change in premium costs for dental and vision benefits.

- General Fund revenue is expected to be \$6.488 million for 2021, while expenses in the fund are expected to exceed that at \$7.504 million.
- The largest number of new projects will be in Public Works using an infusion of \$22 million from the sale of debt. This fund will be the conduit through which this money is funneled to pay for projects. These include

a new water tank and pipeline, and a booster station upgrade. For a complete list of these projects see Vol. 20 No. 10 - October 3, 2020 ([ocn.me](http://ocn.me)).

- The Capital Projects Fund will include \$800,000 in grant money for Jackson Creek Parkway improvements.
- The Community Development Fund will get a \$110,000 allocation from the General Fund. The Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development and Visitor Center will collect \$25,000 from this fund. Resident Ann Howe asked about this payment but did not receive an answer.

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• The Stormwater Drainage Impact Fund has a balance of \$60,000, which will be used only for small projects as they arise during the year or saved for larger projects. The budget, funding appropriations, and mill levy certification were all passed unanimously in separate actions. Stephens commended staff for making tough decisions and sacrifices within the budget. "It's never easy to do that," he said. Foreman praised the board for working together to meet the needs of the employees.

**Two liquor license requests approved**

The board approved two liquor licenses for local businesses. Trails End Taproom, 252 N. Front St., is run by a 20-year Monument resident. The idea of the business is this: patrons receive tokens to pour liquor from numerous pour-your-own taps. Beer, hard cider, mead, kombucha, and wine are offered. The business is coming soon. Existing business Jarrito Loco will be moving to 315 W. Hwy 105 where the Village Inn was housed. Several residents offered support for the move and expected

expansion.

Both requests passed unanimously.

**Planning Commission members reappointed**

Senior Planner Debbie Flynn told the board two current Planning Commission appointments expire on Dec. 31. Chairman Danny Ours and Vice Chair Chris Wilhemi, want to be reappointed having each served two years. The request passed unanimously.

**Public comments on Falcon Commerce Center**

During public comments, Forest Lakes resident Lee Arnett expressed concern over

water use at the soon-to-be expanded Falcon Commerce Center. The commercial center is in Pinon Pines Metropolitan District 3 and water is supplied by Forest Lakes Metropolitan District. Arnett said at the annual HOA meeting water use was discussed since it comes out of the very low Bristlecone Lake. As a lakeshore homeowner, Arnett paid a premium for the location of his house, but fears if the lake dries up, his financial investment could be jeopardized. See related Forest Lakes article on page 11 and [www.ocn.me/v19n4.htm#flmd](http://www.ocn.me/v19n4.htm#flmd).

\*\*\*\*\*

The Monument Board of Trustees usually meets at 6:30 p.m. on the first and third Mondays of each month at Monument Town Hall, 645 Beacon Lite Road. The next meeting is scheduled for Jan. 4. Call 884-8014 or see [www.townofmonument.org](http://www.townofmonument.org) for information. To see upcoming agendas and complete board packets for BOT or to download audio recordings of past meetings, see <http://monumenttownco.minute-sondemand.com> and click on Board of Trustees.

Allison Robenstein can be reached at [allisonrobenstein@ocn.me](mailto:allisonrobenstein@ocn.me).

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Monument Planning Commission, Dec. 9

# UPS Distribution Center Site Plan and Sanctuary Pointe Filing No. 8 Plat approved

By Kate Pangelinan

Monument Planning Commission (MPC) Vice Chair Chris Wilhelmi led the Dec. 9 meeting, which was held remotely due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. Joining him were Commissioners Sean White, Steve King, Martin Trujillo, and Joshua Thomas, with presentations provided by Planner Debbie Flynn.

The meeting focused on two proposals: first, a Final PD Site Plan for an upcoming UPS Distribution Center intended to be part of the Falcon Commerce Center 1 Preliminary PD Site Plan Commercial Subdivision, and secondly a Final Plat for Sanctuary Pointe Filing No. 8. Both proposals were approved unanimously and will now be considered by the Board of Trustees.

Further information about all projects discussed by the MPC can be found in the meeting packets located at [monumenttownco.documents-on-demand.com](http://monumenttownco.documents-on-demand.com). This site is also a good resource for accessing approved meeting minutes as well as the agendas for upcoming meetings. This latest MPC meeting, along with many older ones, can be found recorded on the Town of Monument's YouTube channel at [youtube.com/channel/UCd-FL08UcqZfFdkio5jT6GDA](https://youtube.com/channel/UCd-FL08UcqZfFdkio5jT6GDA). Citizens may find it easier to search for "Town of Monument" or "Monument Planning Commission" in YouTube's search bar.

### UPS Distribution Center

Some facts about the project, according to Flynn's presentation, the meeting packet, and the MPC's discussion:

- The site comprises 16.91 acres. It's located at 1671 Squadron Drive, with Woodcarver Road to the west and south.
- Surrounding businesses include the Pilot Travel Center, Valero Gas Station, and Pioneer Landscape Centers.
- The UPS distribution center itself is expected to be 98,290 square feet. It will include warehousing and administration offices, as well as a 24-hour guardhouse.
- Improvements will be made to Woodcarver Road, and when they're completed it will become the preferred route for UPS trucks.
- Flynn provided schedules for both UPS brown trucks and larger tractor trailers serving the



Above: UPS Distribution Center vicinity map. Courtesy the Town of Monument.



Above: UPS Distribution Center North Elevation. Courtesy the Town of Monument.



Above: UPS Distribution Center West Elevation. Courtesy the Town of Monument.

business. For brown trucks, 100 drivers will leave the site between 8:30 and 9 a.m., and between 5 and 8 p.m. It's impossible to say how many will make it back per hour. For large tractor trailers, 8-10 trucks will arrive at the facility between midnight and 6 a.m. Three to five trucks will depart between 7 and 11 p.m.

- A picture of the facility design is provided in Flynn's presentation and in the meeting packet.
- The project will provide jobs in Monument, including part-time positions that include full benefits. Some staff is anticipated to transfer in from other UPS locations, but new positions are also expected.
- According to the meeting packet, the applicant is Ware Malcomb (Brian Weiss), and the property owner is UPS (Sergio Enriquez).

MPC discussion points included a desire for more than the anticipated four bike spaces, as well as hopes for a bike lane/easy options for Monument residents to commute to work without driving. MPC members expressed excitement for an "ideal employer" moving to Monument, and a project representative stated that UPS hopes to incorporate some of the MPC's suggestions, and that the company does its best to be "a great corporate citizen," employer, and neighbor.

No citizens spoke during the Public Comment period, and a motion to approve the proposal with the condition that "no building permits will be issued until access permits are issued by El Paso County or the Town of Monument, whomever has ownership of Woodcarver and Baptist Road" passed unanimously, 5-0.

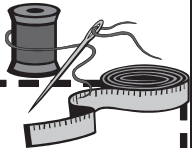
### Sanctuary Pointe Filing No. 8

Some facts about the project, per Flynn's presentation, the meeting packet, and the PC's discussion:

- This site comprises 45.551 acres, with 27 single-family lots, three tracts, and two streets (Forest Cloud Way and Sunset Splendor Lane). Lots range in size. The plat is consistent with a previously approved PD site plan.

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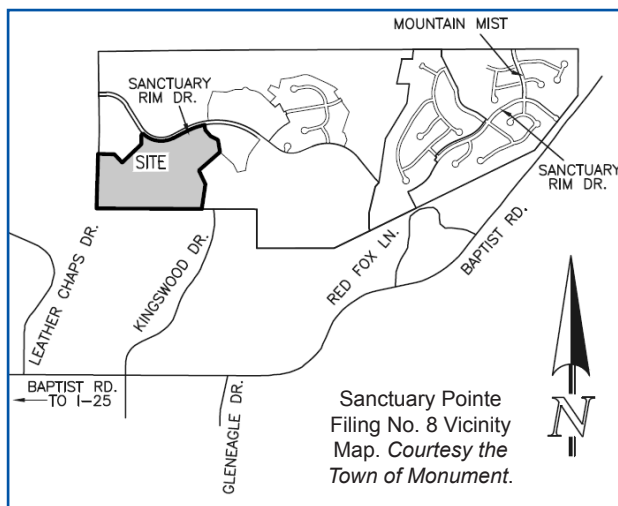
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- Filing No. 8 is part of Sanctuary Pointe Phase 3.
- The applicant is listed as Classic Consulting Engineers & Surveyors LLC in the meeting packet, and the property owner is Baptist Road Investments.

Ken Kimple expressed some concerns Promontory Pointe residents have during the Public Comment period, including worries about fire safety/evacuation routes and the number of homes anticipated for new developments.

Other topics of discussion for the MPC involved how many trees get cleared out to make room for housing, as well as suggestions for how to potentially prevent losing so many trees, and the importance of developments sharing wildfire evacuation plans with residents. A motion to approve Sanctuary Pointe Filing No. 8's Final Plat passed unanimously, 5-0.

#### Other items

- During a non-agenda related Public Comment section, Ken Kimple asked for a note to be passed on to the Board of Trustees: When the town is reviewing site plans, he would like to know when the traffic studies were completed and by what means.
- Flynn offered an update on the town code re-

write: they are within budget and on schedule, having reached up to five chapters of code that have been "submitted, reviewed, and commented" on. Once the revised chapters are

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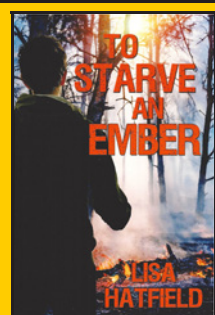
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approved, they will be posted on the town's website "for the residents to view."

\*\*\*\*\*

For the time being, all MPC meetings will held through Webex software, considering Monument is at COVID-19 Threat Level Red. Citizens are also afforded the option of calling in to listen to meetings, and if alternate accommodations are needed, the town website states, "Individuals without the ability to participate by phone or computer may contact Drew Anderson at [danderson@tomgov](mailto:danderson@tomgov).

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The next PC meeting is scheduled to be held at

6 p.m. Jan. 13.

Kate Pangelinan can be reached at [katepangelinan@ocn.me](mailto:katepangelinan@ocn.me).

### Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, Dec. 10

## New mayor and trustees take their seats



**Above:** At the Dec. 10 meeting of the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, the old and new board posed for a picture. From left, top row: Paul Banta, Nicole Currier, Jessica Farr, Sam Padgett, Karen Stuth, Mark Schuler. Bottom row: John Cressman, Glant Havenar, Patty Mettler, Bob Mutu, Susan Miner, Bill Bass. Outgoing Mayor Cressman, and trustees Banta, Schuler, Mettler, and Miner are stepping down. Incoming Mayor Bill Bass and trustees Nicole Currier, Jessica Farr, and Sam Padgett are stepping into new roles. Returning trustees are Glant Havenar and Bob Mutu. *Photo by James Howald*

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

A new mayor and four new trustees were sworn in at the Dec. 10 meeting of the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees (PLBOT), marking a turning point in the town's leadership. Town Administrator and Clerk Dawn Collins and outgoing Mayor John Cressman, along with Bob Radosevich, who recently stepped down as the town's interim manager, awarded certificates of appreciation to the outgoing trustees, and shared some thoughts on what their service to the town meant to them.

Collins administered the oath of office to incoming Mayor Bill Bass and incoming Trustees Sam Padgett, Jessica Farr, Karen Stuth, and Nicole Currier. Bass's first official act was to read a proclamation in honor of Cressman. A mayor pro tem was elected, and a resolution to adopt the 2021 budget and certify mill levies was passed. The board heard staff reports. Finally, the board went into executive session.



**Above:** Outgoing Palmer Lake Mayor John Cressman (left) accepts a certificate from incoming Mayor Bill Bass. *Photo by James Howald.*

### Certificates of appreciation awarded

Before awarding the certificates of appreciation, Collins thanked Cressman and the trustees for the support they gave her when she became the town's administrator and clerk, adding that their welcome had encouraged her to share her ideas for improving the town's administration.

Cressman joined Collins to present certificates to outgoing Trustees Mark Schuler, Paul Banta, Patty Mettler, and Susan Miner. Cressman said his four terms as mayor had been "a special time," adding "all in all it's been really meaningful to serve and serve with you guys." Cressman apologized to anyone he might have offended in his eight years as mayor. "Each one of us has brought his expertise, insight and integrity to this town," he said. Cressman asked the incoming trustees to "please embrace the staff . . . this is absolutely the cream of the crop," and ended by saying "It's a great town; we love it."

Radosevich reflected on his last year of service to the town, saying it had been a team effort, that handling the budget and the consequences of COVID-19 had been challenging, that some residents had been angry with leadership, but that "we did a good job."

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**Above:** Incoming Palmer Lake Board of Trustees members, from left, Nicole Currier, Jessica Farr, Sam Padgett, and Karen Stuth take their oaths of office. Photo by James Howald

Returning Trustee Glant Havenar gave Cressman a card from the trustees, and outgoing Trustee Susan Miner gave some words of advice to the new trustees: “Never lose sight of the fact that you have been given a very precious and very fragile gift—trust. . . . Your agenda should be all about them not you . . . Take your oath very seriously.”

**New mayor and trustees sworn in; Cressman honored with proclamation**

Following the recess for dinner, Collins swore in Bill Bass as mayor, after which Bass took Cressman’s seat at the table. Handing Bass the gavel, Cressman said “It’s all yours!”

Bass and Collins then swore in new trustees Padgett, Farr, Stuth, and Currier, who replaced Banta, Schuler, Miner and Mettler at the table.

Bass then read a proclamation honoring Cressman for his steadfast leadership and for serving eight years as mayor and another eight years on the Planning Commission, for contributing to projects done by the Water Department and the Parks Department and for serving on the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) and the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce.

The newly seated board and the audience stood to applaud Cressman for his service to the town.

**Mayor pro tem elected**

Havenar and Padgett were both nominated to serve as mayor pro tem. Padgett won with four votes from Bass, Currier, Farr, and Padgett. Havenar received three votes from trustees Stuth, Mutu, and Havenar. The mayor pro tem acts in place of the mayor when the mayor is unavailable.

**2021 budget adopted and mill levies certified**

The board voted unanimously to pass Resolution 23-2020, which formally adopted the 2021 budget that had been discussed in previous meetings, and certified the town’s total mill levy

to 21.238 mills, with 11.238 mills going to general operating expenses and 10.00 mills going to the town’s Fire Department. The total revenue from the mill levies will be \$813,328.

**Highlights of staff reports**  
Staff and trustee reports included these points:

- Plans have been received for the project to repair the Town Hall, and town administration is working on approving the plan and obtaining bids to do the work.
- Plans to build an Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant ramp for the town’s library are under review and a timeline for the work is being developed.
- Radosovich will assist the town on the Town Hall repairs and the library ramp project.
- The U.S. Forest Service will partner with the town to police the trails north of the town’s reservoirs where issues like abandoned campfires have been a problem.
- GMS, a civil engineering company, has helped the town with a grant application to obtain funds to address drainage issues.
- Interviews are planned with candidates for the town’s open water technician position.
- Funds available to the town through the CARES Act will be used to build the library ramp.
- The Pikes Peak Library District and the town are finalizing a lease agreement for the district to pay the town \$1,000 a month and a portion of the utilities cost for use of the library building.
- Funding from PPACG for the town’s Gap traffic project has been increased by 30 percent so that the project can be completed more quickly.

Following the staff and trustee reports, the board went into executive session. No action was taken in the session.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Board of Trustees is scheduled to hold two meetings in January 2021, on Jan. 14 and 28 at 6 p.m. at Town Hall, 42 Valley Crescent. Meetings are normally held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. Information: 481-2953.

James Howald can be reached at [jameshowald@ocn.me](mailto:jameshowald@ocn.me).  
Jackie Burhans can be reached at [jackieburhans@ocn.me](mailto:jackieburhans@ocn.me).

**Palmer Lake Board of Trustees Special Meeting, Dec. 15**  
**Board struggles to alleviate impacts of Level Red restrictions on restaurants**

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans  
In a Special Meeting on Dec. 15, the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees met to address the impact that a recent decision by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) has had on the town’s restaurants. On Nov. 23, the CDPHE notified El Paso County that the county would move to Level Red on the state’s COVID-19 dial framework. Indoor dining is prohibited in counties so classified. On Nov. 27, the CD-

PHE’s decision went into effect.  
Incoming Mayor Bill Bass, incoming Trustees Nicole Currier, Jessica Farr, Sam Padgett, and Karen Stuth, and returning Trustees Glant Havenar and Bob Mutu strategized how to reduce the impact of the CDPHE’s decision on the town’s restaurants. Town Attorney Matt Krob and Town Administrator and Clerk Dawn Collins also took part in the discussion. Two issues took center stage: how to respond to the CDPHE’s deci-

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sion and how to deploy the town’s remaining Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) funds to assist the town’s restaurants.

The board also decided when to hold its retreat.

Due to audio problems with the recorded stream of the meeting, the remarks of Krob were inaudible and are therefore not included in this article.

Resolution responding to CDPHE debated

Bass and the trustees first considered passing a resolution opposing CDPHE’s decision. Collins pointed out that the CARES Act requires municipalities receiving funds to abide by state guidelines and directives and

recommended against passing a resolution, because that might jeopardize the funds the town could receive.

Havenar emphasized the urgency of helping restaurants to survive and pointed out that the town’s restaurants provided an essential service because the town has no grocery store or gas station, and food delivery is complicated by the fact that town residents pick up their mail at the Post Office and may not have street numbers posted on their homes.

Bass said the town’s small size and distance from area businesses present challenges.

Trying to obtain a variance from the CDPHE decision was discussed, as was writing a letter to Gov. Po-

lis asking for assistance keeping the town’s restaurant’s open.

Following this discussion, the board did not move forward with the resolution.

Board debates best use of CARES funds

Collins told the board that the town has \$54,000 in CARES funds remaining. There had been discussion of using those funds to complete the replacement of the ramp to the town library, a project that would require an amount approximately twice the CARES funds to complete.

Collins told the board that in the first allocation of CARES funds, all the restaurants who applied received funds, which were capped at \$6,500 per restaurant. She added that the remaining funds had to be dispersed by Dec. 30.

Initially, the board proposed splitting the CARES funds between restaurants and the library ramp project. Havenar pointed out that the library included the town’s historical society and provided services to home-schoolers and the elderly. Mutu also emphasized the importance of the library.

Collins asked the board for direction on how to allocate the funds.

Padgett, who owns a local restaurant, emphasized the need to protect the town’s economy and the importance of getting CARES funding to businesses as quickly as possible.

Havenar suggested using an event like the town’s Winter Fest to support restaurants by turning the lake into a skating rink and having restaurants serve food to visitors.

Marina LaRiva, owner of La Rosa, a local restaurant serving New Mexican dishes, told the board about the challenges she had faced to keep her business afloat and asked that the town take some pressure off of restaurant owners by providing language for signs that restaurants could use to make sure customers understand what constraints on dining were put in place by town government rather than the restaurant owner.

Padgett told the board that 80 percent of restaurants in El Paso County would likely close permanently by February.

Bass asked the board what portion of the CARES funds should go to businesses and what portion to the library ramp project. Dividing the funds equally between the two items was the starting point, but as

the discussion progressed the need to keep businesses afloat gradually displaced the library ramp project. Farr pointed out that businesses provide tax revenue to the town, which is not true of the library.

Bass suggested that businesses closest to shutting their doors be given a higher priority. This was a different criterion than was used in the original distribution of CARES funds, and Stuth said she thought it was unfair to change the criteria between distributions. Collins felt the criteria would need to change for the second distribution since the first round did not include loss of revenue as a factor.

Bass said other funds could be found in the budget to rebuild the library ramp and argued he did not want to lose the support of the library district for returning the town’s library to service.

Collins said that the timeline to distribute funds was very short, and that businesses would need to apply by Dec. 23 since the administrative office was closed on Dec. 24 and the funds needed to be disbursed by the end of December. Collins added that the funds could only be used to address business expenses incurred due to the virus and that loss of revenue did not qualify a business to receive funds. She used rent and payroll as examples of expenses that would qualify.

As the discussion progressed, the necessity of supporting business gradually took priority over the library project, and the board eventually decided to deploy as many of the funds as possible toward businesses and to look elsewhere in the budget for money for the library project.

The board decided to cap funds going to a business at \$6,500, as it had done on the first distribution. Businesses who applied would receive funds on a first-come, first-served basis.

Board retreat scheduled

The board decided to hold its retreat on Jan. 7 and 8.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Board of Trustees is scheduled to hold two meetings in January 2021, on Jan. 14 and 28 at 6 p.m. at Town Hall, 42 Valley Crescent. Meetings are normally held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. Information: 481-2953.

James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me.

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

D38 BOE (Cont. from 1)

local health officials and that although schools were not considered super spreaders of the COVID-19 virus, districts must abide by county ordinances.

Director Matthew Clawson said that remote learning is not the district’s best option and hopes that secondary schools can return full time in person soon.

Taylor commented that his takeaway from the meeting with health officials was that, although all wish to return in person full time, we must abide by the rules. The availability of a new vaccine alleviates some fear, but it will be a time before all can be vaccinated.

In his Superintendent update, Somers first offered condolences to

the family of Ron Philips, a 2019 Lewis-Palmer Hall of Fame honoree and former English teacher and coach at Lewis-Palmer High School.

Somers thanked the many district employees in departments such as food services, maintenance, bus drivers, and custodians for their continued efforts to maintain the district. He especially commended the nursing staff in their efforts at contact tracing.

Somers said District 38 was one of the few able to keep elementary schools open full time during the past semester. He said that the beginning of the second semester will be delayed by a week to provide additional training of the teachers regarding distance learning. The teachers will

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We no longer care that some of these vocal people are loved, or amazing teachers. Their unreasonable demands are destroying our kids and making teaching impossible for other amazing teachers who are stuck accommodating the extremism of people who should have never been in your buildings in the first place. Teachers who cannot risk exposure need to resign and be replaced by teachers who can do the job — even if it means our children are taught by less experienced teachers. That is how damaging this situation has become.

**We call on you take immediate steps to provide FULL-TIME, NO-MASK, IN-PERSON LEARNING to all D38 students, K–12, who need it and the taxpayers who are paying for it. Notify staff and parents that exposure to viruses is a natural consequence of participating in society, and it is up to them to protect themselves, their children, and vulnerable family members. We willingly accept those risks and we want our school district back.**

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return on Jan. 4 and the students on Jan. 11.

He said there have been many isolations and quarantines among the secondary schools, and this necessitates training teachers to more effectively educate online. In the second semester, synchronous learning will be required. Students must log in with the class and teachers must have a way to monitor participation.

Chief Academic Officer Lori Benton said that teachers will soon begin discussing grading. Some classes such as physical education and languages pose a problem online.

When urged to reopen sooner in person full time for secondary students, Somers said that we still cannot have more than 15 students at a time in a classroom. Until the virus risk level is reduced from red to orange, no changes can be made. Monument Academy's secondary school cannot be viewed as an example because it is a large building with relatively few students.

The board agreed to seek information from other districts on how they handle the issue.

The board voted to approve its annual financial report. *For details on the report, see <https://www.ocn.me/v20n12.htm#d38boe>.*

Board Treasurer Ron Schwarz announced that the district's bonds had been refinanced, resulting in a \$1.9 million savings for taxpayers. *For details on the bonds, please see <https://www.ocn.me/v20n11.htm#d38>.*

Chief Financial Officer Shanna Seelye reported that the student count had grown by 18 between the October count and December. The board had budgeted accurately for this year.

Seelye explained the mill levy proposal for 2021. The board approved a levy of 41 mills. This is a decrease from the previous year due to the increase in value of property in the district.

**Strategic plan**

Clawson, Benton, and Schwarz reported on efforts to implement Goal 3 of the district strategic plan. This goal involves professional development. It was proposed that this be applied in a variety of ways:

- Develop a culture committed to common core values.
- Require a high level of performance among staff.
- Provide the staff with opportunities for training and sharing of best practices.
- Provide a competitive rate of compensation.

Clawson reminded the board

that the district is one of the highest performing and yet the lowest funded in the state.

Somers commented that it would take several months to develop and implement this plan. Benton said that since 2018, the district has included staff development time in the calendar.

**Energy audit**

The board approved a contract with Schneider Electric to conduct an investment-grade audit of the district's energy use. Schneider's assignment is to determine savings, cost, scope of work, and funding methods for projects. A timeline will also be developed.

Some proposed proj-

ects include mechanical upgrades, security vestibules, LED lighting, and a standardization of automation between all campuses. To view the contract, please see boarddocs on the district website, [lewispalmer.org](http://lewispalmer.org).

\*\*\*\*\*

The Lewis-Palmer District 38 Board of Education usually meets at 6 p.m. on the third Monday of the month at its

learning center, 146 Jefferson St., Monument. Due to COVID restrictions, seating is very limited, but all meetings are live-streamed. The next meeting will be on Jan. 25 due to school closure for Martin Luther King Jr. Day on Jan. 18.

*Harriet Halbig  
can be contacted at [harriethalbig@ocn.me](mailto:harriethalbig@ocn.me).*



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Monument Academy School Board, Dec. 10

## Board hears assessment report, COVID-19 impacts

By Jackie Burhans

The Monument Academy (MA) School Board met on Dec. 10 to hear what assessments reveal about the impact of COVID-19 interruptions, and to hear how the Level Red designation and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) quarantine changes may impact the school.

**Assessment report**

Assistant Principal and Assessment Coordinator Marty Venticinque reported to the board on the results of Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) assessments. He prefaced his report by saying that the big question was going to be the impact on achievement of COVID-19 interruptions last spring. Schools were not able to get NWEA or Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) results from last spring. MA normally compares results spring to spring or fall to spring. Also, NWEA released a new version of its norms based on

nationwide data from the past five years. So, he recalculated previous years to compare data. He felt the best approach was to look at percentile rankings rather than raw scores.

Venticinque stated that most of the prognostication was that the disruption would have a greater impact on math, which he confirmed. Impacts were also apparent in reading and language arts, primarily for younger kids. Science scores stayed stable. At MA, there was a drop of 10 percentile points in math. MA was already implementing interventions that should show results in the spring. In elementary school, fifth grade was, like middle school, seeing only a slight drop in reading and language. In lower grades, there was more of a reading/language drop as confirmed by the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) testing. Math scores were hit more heavily in lower grade levels as expected by educators and assessment providers. Despite this, most kids are at or above the benchmarks.

Board President Melanie Strop asked how much time was lost and how much time it would take to get back in the game with math. Venticinque replied that no one really knows as this hasn't happened before. We just want to see kids grow, he said, it doesn't matter how much. He pointed out that MA did well in growth metrics comparing fall to fall and that we are comparing to norms taken in a normal year. It's more important, Venticinque asserted, to have interventions like the Math Accelerator Program they already have in place.

Board member Megghan St. Aubyn asked if the NWEA tests were changed to align more with Common Core and if that might have affected results. Venticinque said that the only changes were to break up the math scores in groupings of kindergarten through second grade, second through fifth, and sixth and up. The overlap in second grade reflects the assumption that kids can better read and explain the math in the second semester. NWEA also recalibrated and lowered the benchmark by looking at averages around the nation.

**Impact of COVID-19 Level Red designation**

Chief Operating Officer Christianna Herrera said she was thrilled to have students back on campus after doing a reset by having an extra week of distance learning after the Thanksgiving break. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CD-PHE) had moved El Paso County to Level Red (severe risk) on the state's dial framework effective Friday, Nov. 27 at 5 p.m. She also noted that the CDC was revising its guidance by shortening the quarantine times for schools, allowing those affected to return after seven days with a negative test result or, otherwise, after 10 days instead of 14. She said MA is approaching this change with caution because test results are taking at least four days. She said that the change reflects that the most contagious time is after five to seven days when symptoms start to show; after 10 days there



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is a smaller chance of becoming positive or contagious. This change may help schools stay open.

She said she was grateful that the district is committed to in-person learning as much as possible and that everyone is striving to do what is best for students.

Highlights

The following items were highlighted at the board meeting:

- Herrera sent the board a strategic plan document for their review for next spring. The last time it was updated was in 2016.
- Herrera reported that the Colorado Charter Schools Program grant had been approved going forward with an opportunity to recoup funds later if high school enrollment projections are met.
- MA held general enrollment and eighth-grade information nights

Forest Lakes Metropolitan District and Pinon Pines Metro Districts 1, 2, and 3, Dec. 7

Wastewater rates increase approved

By Lisa Hatfield

The boards for Forest Lake Metropolitan District (FLMD, Pinon Pines Metropolitan District 2 and 3 (PPMD 2 and PPMD 3), and the separate board for Pinon Pines Metropolitan District 1 (PPMD 1) met on Dec. 7. They met to discuss 2020 and 2021 budgets. FLMD approved a wastewater increase, and PPMD 1 discussed the recreational areas.

Board members for FLMD, PPMD 2 and PPMD 3 are: President George Lenz, executive vice president of finance of Classic Homes; Secretary James Boulton, vice president/project manager of Classic Homes; Assistant Secretary and Treasurer Doug Stimple, CEO of Classic Homes; and Assistant Secretary Joe Loidolt, president of Classic Homes. One board member vacancy exists in all three of these districts.

PPMD 1 board directors are all residents of Forest Lakes. They are President Mike Hitchcock, Vice President Mike Slavick, Secretary Chris Paulene, AJ Slavick, and Ashley Franklin.

Ann Nichols is the manager for all four districts.

**Note:** FLMD, west of I-25 at the end of West Baptist Road, is a Title 32 service district in El Paso County established in 1985. FLMD is the half-acre operating district responsible for the public infrastructure and utility and general governmental services for the residents of PPMD 1, 2, and 3, which actually collect the property taxes. PPMD 1 and 2 are in unincorporated El Paso County, but the commercial section PPMD 3 is within Monument town limits.

Wastewater rate increase

In an FLMD public hearing on a proposed 7% wastewater rate increase, Nichols said her regular cost of service study found that the current wastewater rates still do not cover the cost of providing service. It is currently in a deficit that is being made up, temporarily, by development fee revenue, but this is not sustainable.

The proposed UPS Distribution Center would be in PPMD 3 and would be served by FLMD if it is approved by the Monument Board of Trustees.

that were well attended, as part of its marketing effort.

- Distance Learning Specialist Janyse Skalla reported that the schoolwide distance learning week went well. She said that secondary school distance learning had increased slightly due to family needs or pre-holiday caution.
- Strop reported that the Governance Committee met but needed more time to review policies and asked to table this discussion so that information can be sent out for the board to review and to highlight changes.
- Board member Ryan Graham provided an update on the Teacher Gift Committee, commending the organizers and noting that parents donated a total of \$31,792, which funded

\$268 each for full-time and \$134 for part-time employees.

- Patricia Silva, a parent who signed up to be a substitute teacher, reported that she spent a day in a classroom. She thanked the teacher for sharing her students and said she learned that kids really appreciate their teachers. Note: Please see school and district websites for information on how to become a substitute and the special rules enacted for this year due to COVID-19.

\*\*\*\*\*

The next meeting will be on Thursday, Jan. 14 at 6 p.m. The MA School Board usually meets at 6 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. Meetings may be held in-person and/or via Zoom, which will be streamed to the MA YouTube channel. For more information on how to join the meeting in person or virtually or to submit a public comment see <https://bit.ly/ma-boe>.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at [jackieburhans@ocn.me](mailto:jackieburhans@ocn.me).

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- related to the bond issue.
- PPMD 1 2020 budget amendment related to bond issue. It achieved its goal to reduce the debt service mill levy.
  - 2021 budgets and appropriating funds for FLMD, PPMD 1, PPMD 2, and PPMD 3.
  - 2021 mill levies for PPMD 1 and PPMD 2.

Nichols said the opportunity had arisen to purchase an unused water line from Triview Metropolitan District. FLMD could use this infrastructure instead of building a new line for water distribution on the west side of Falcon Commerce center in PPMD 3. Lenz reminded Nichols that the board hadn't heard about this possibility before and needed to approve it, but the consensus was that saving "a big chunk of money" was a great idea.

She said \$125,000 is in the 2021 budget for FLMD's half of a joint project with the developer to replace turf

grass in playground park with Astro-turf.

North Monument Creek  
Interceptor

Nichols said the regional wastewater NMCI project has had few meetings since construction on the Air Force Academy Visitor Center has slowed down. Also, water districts in northern El Paso County need to be comfortable knowing they could get their water return flows back before they can support NMCI, which would send wastewater down to Colorado Springs.

FLMD ratified a memorandum of understanding about the northern water delivery system siting study that has also been approved by Triview. Other northern county water entities including Donala Water and Sanitation District, Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, and the Town of Monument are also discussing signing this non-binding agreement which would provide evidence of

their coordination to design a northern water delivery system that could bring the return flows back uphill.

Stimple said FLMD is a relatively small player but would benefit greatly if the project gets completed. Initially, FLMD didn't plan to participate in the related northern water delivery system, but after Bristlecone Lake got so low this summer, it is rethinking the need to use its return flows, Nichols said.

Southern trail status,  
lake parking, security

Nichols said most of the trail south of Bristlecone Lake was now open to residents. It is still closed before it crosses Beaver Creek due to construction in Filing 5. She said Classic Homes thinks within a month the trail could loop to the north side for 3.5 miles, pleasing a lot of residents. Eventually there will also be a bridge across the creek.

Tom Blunk of CP Real Estate Capital, representing Forest Lakes

LLC and Forest Lakes Residential Development, said Forest Lakes LLC's intent was that sometime in 2021 it would deed the trail property to the district. Right now, it is an access easement.

AJ Slavick asked Nichols to check with Steve Emery about when the lake parking lot will be unlocked. The PPMD1 board discussed at length the amount of security needed by Hammersmith Management to make sure only Forest Lakes residents and people who have purchased permits are accessing the lake.

\*\*\*\*\*

The meetings of FLMD and PPMD 1, 2, and 3 are usually held the first Monday of each month at 4 p.m. Meeting notices are posted on <https://forest-lakesmetrodistrict.com/>. For general questions, contact District Manager Ann Nichols, 719-327-5810, [anichol-sduffy@aol.com](mailto:anichol-sduffy@aol.com).

Lisa Hatfield can be contacted at [lishatfield@ocn.me](mailto:lishatfield@ocn.me).

Triview Metropolitan District, Dec. 10

\$5.5 million for water storage tops 2021 list of needs

By Jennifer Kaylor

At the Dec. 10 Triview Metropolitan District Board of Directors meeting, the board conducted its 2021 budget public hearing. Staff and directors also expressed their appreciation for general counsel Gary Shupp's many years of service.

All board directors, Water Superintendent Shawn Sexton, and district

accountant Cathy Fromm attended the meeting remotely. District Manager Jim McGrady, water attorney Chris Cummins, Shupp, and Parks and Open Space Superintendent Matt Rayno attended in person.

Triview is a Title 32 special district in Monument that provides road, landscaping, and parks and open space maintenance, and water

and wastewater services to Jackson Creek, Promontory Pointe, Sanctuary Pointe, and several commercial areas. See <https://triviewmetro.com/districtMap> for a map of district boundaries.

The Dec. 10 meeting agenda and board packet may be accessed via [https://triviewmetro.com/assets/documents/board/agenda/2020/Agenda\\_2020-12-10\\_final.pdf](https://triviewmetro.com/assets/documents/board/agenda/2020/Agenda_2020-12-10_final.pdf) and [https://triviewmetro.com/assets/documents/board/agenda/2020/boardPacket\\_2020-12-10.pdf](https://triviewmetro.com/assets/documents/board/agenda/2020/boardPacket_2020-12-10.pdf), respectively.

2021 budget components  
crystallize

President Mark Melville opened the public hearing to receive commentary about Triview's 2021 budget. No members of the public commented, and the hearing was closed.

McGrady comprehensively reviewed the district's anticipated revenue, expenses, and capital projects for the new year. Triview functions under two funds: a general fund and a water and wastewater enterprise fund. The first two general fund revenue line items confirmed the district's intent to collect only 27 of its levy of 35 mills for 2021. Revenue estimated at \$2.6 million reflected a property tax assessment of 26 mills to pay for debt service. One additional property tax mill provided an estimated \$101,330 for operations, resulting in the 27-mill total that the board approved at its November meeting.

Anticipating development of about 150 homes, or single-family equivalents, the budget forecast dipped in one-time developer fees such as drainage impact; road and bridge; and park, recreation, and landscape fees compared to 2020 revenue. McGrady planned to hire a consultant to review developer fees to ensure cost-sharing equity.

The enterprise fund reflected that most of its revenue is generated from customers' water and wastewater service fees plus base rates and administrative fees. McGrady confirmed that none of those fees increased for the next fiscal year. Customer service revenue forecast for the enterprise fund included \$1.8 million and \$1.7 million from water and wastewater,

respectively. The base rate and administrative fees were projected to add another \$867,221. Fromm confirmed that the district's renewable water fee, Comanche lease, and interest income would be funneled into the enterprise fund's debt service.

Most regular expenses for the two funds reflected moderate increases with more dramatic jumps demonstrating the district's growth, e.g., electrical costs to pump water to additional homes and doubled efforts to maintain a water line cleaning schedule. Some added costs included a rental and cleaning service for Public Works and Parks personnel uniforms and in-house design and enhancement of landscaping at the northwest corner of Leather Chaps Drive and Baptist Road.

McGrady described several pieces of equipment and a few projects that comprised general capital. The equipment would serve to enhance the efficiency and utility of Public Works and Parks crews' expanded repair and maintenance tasks resulting from district growth. This category also reflected a maximum of \$500,000 to complete construction of the Public Works building. Additional capital was set aside to outfit the building with computers and other office equipment as well as array Triview's new office location with desks and furniture. McGrady explained that the district's current desks and office furniture would eventually be transferred to the Public Works building. Completion of the mill and overlay of Leather Chaps Drive was the only planned road project, but work on Kitchener Way might also be considered.

Some of the enterprise fund's capital projects designated funds to support improvements or enhancements to the district's water pumps and automated well system as well as design and permitting for the North Monument Creek Interceptor—a potential regional wastewater system—and a potential drinking water regional northern delivery system.

Throughout 2020 and into 2021, the district had been and will have been acquiring renewable water and water storage rights. These acquisi-

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tions resulted in necessary change case filings and legal fees which the district projected at \$500,000. The largest capital expense, \$5.5 million, was forecast to cover a 1,000 acre-foot water storage acquisition plus installation of an inlet and spillway at the Stonewall Springs Reservoir Complex south reservoir. McGrady confirmed that the district has right of first refusal on the \$3.5 million water storage purchase and the remaining \$2 million targeted the inlet and spillway cost.

McGrady characterized the upcoming fiscal year as bringing clarity due to the water purchases, storage acquisition, and completion of paving projects. “I think we’re set up as a district to fund what we need to fund in order to bring renewable water and reliable wastewater service to the district,” he said.

Directors voted to unanimously approve Resolution 2020-19 that summarized the revenue and expenditures for each fund, adopted the 2021 budget, appropriated the funds, and certified the mill levy. See board packet pdf pages 22 through 39 for the resolution, budget, and property tax assessed valuation.

McGrady presented a second resolution that he deemed a house-keeping item. Resolution 2020-18 confirmed the Conexus Business Park as subdistrict B within Triview. This measure was approved by voters at the Nov. 3 general election. The resolution was approved unanimously.

**Stonewall Springs bids opened**  
Acting as the major shareholder of the Stonewall Springs Reservoir Co., the district reviewed proposals for the installation of the previously mentioned inlet and spillway structures at

the south reservoir. Three bids were received: Moltz Constructors bid \$1.74 million; Western States Reclamation bid \$1.59 million; and A-N-S Construction bid \$2.24 million. Once some of the pricing and the concrete subcontractor were confirmed, McGrady expressed his intention to move ahead with Western States Reclamation which, he noted, fell about \$400,000 below the 2021 budget estimate.

**A fond farewell**

Early in the meeting the board took a moment to offer its thanks to Shupp, who was retiring, for his depth of corporate knowledge and expertise as well as his guidance concerning Triview’s history. Melville attributed Shupp’s efforts as “an integral part of the success of the district.” McGrady presented Shupp with a plaque “in recognition of his dedication and service to Triview Metropolitan District” and a gift certificate. Shupp completed his service to the district Dec. 31.

At 7:35 p.m., the board entered executive session §24-6-402(4)(a)(b) (e) and (f) acquisitions, legal advice, negotiations, and personnel matters regarding the following general topics: negotiations associated with water delivery infrastructure; water storage on the Arkansas River and its tributaries; negotiations with potential contractors and miners concerning the Stonewall Springs Reservoir Complex; negotiations regarding acquisition of renewable water resources; and personnel matters, salary and bonus to staff. OCN later confirmed that the board did not take actions following the executive session.

\*\*\*\*\*

The next Triview board meeting is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Jan. 21, the

third Thursday of the month. Triview is relocating from 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 300 to 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302. Check the district’s website or call 488-6868 for meeting updates, office location, and to con-

firm if the meeting will be in person or via conference call. See also “Triview Metropolitan District” on Facebook or Twitter.com/@TriviewMetro. Jennifer Kaylor can be contacted at [jenniferkaylor@ocn.me](mailto:jenniferkaylor@ocn.me).

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**\$1,250.00 to Wounded Heroes USA**  
Right: We first heard about Wounded Heroes USA from our neighbor, Bill Miller, who founded the organization in 2010. He is well known in the Monument area for his services. As an outdoorsman and a vet, he decided he could use his skills to benefit wounded active duty soldiers as well as gold star families who lost their loved ones in the military. In the past 10 years he has served over 400 soldiers and families in the form of therapeutic fishing trips, family-focused outdoor activities, and even direct funds to Fort Carson soldiers who may not be able to afford groceries or utilities. He directly supports the rehabilitation of our local soldiers.

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*Donala Water and Sanitation District, Dec. 10*  
**2021 finances and policy changes established**

*By Jennifer Kaylor*

At the Dec. 10 meeting, the Donala Water and Sanitation District Board of Directors reviewed resolutions to approve the 2021 budget, received recommendations about policy changes, and honored the service of a retiring utilities staff member. Director Bill George attended the meeting via GoToMeeting and the remaining directors and staff attended in person.

**2021 budget confirmed**

Directors reviewed five resolutions to address the various facets of adopting the 2021 budget. Resolution 2020-9 confirmed that the budget had been published and was open to public inspection, and taxpayers had been given opportunity to register objections. Estimated expenditures for the year totaled \$12.30 million. Revenues reached \$25.79 million. The next resolution, 2020-10, appropriated the revenues to their respective budgetary funds.

The rates resolution, 2020-11, set the rates and fees for 2021 with a 3% increase. The minimum water service rate increased from \$27 per month to \$27.81 per month. Water use tiers reflected a bump from \$7.11 to \$7.32 for tier one, and the remaining tiers showed subsequent increases.

The property tax mill levy was separated into two resolutions: one

mill levy for area A, the major geographic of the district in which residents receive both water and wastewater services, and a lower mill levy for area B. Residents in area B receive only wastewater services and are thus subject to fewer mills. Resolutions 2020-12 and 2020-13 established revenue from area A as \$1.97 million and area B revenue as \$3,299, and their corresponding mills were levied at 21.296 and 10.648, respectively.

Members of the public did not offer comment and the directors passed all resolutions.

Generally, board meeting packets are available on the district’s website by accessing District Information>Board & Public Meetings>Meetings>Board Packet. Budget 2021 documents are available on pdf pages 13 through 36. Note: Occasionally file size issues hamper timely posting of packets.

**Policy changes approved**

General Manager Jeff Hodge presented his recommendations for policy changes pertaining to district property, equipment, and vehicles. The board had requested a review of the district’s policies at an earlier date.

Hodge confirmed that his recommendations were based on a review of Donala’s current policies as well as recommendations of the Special District Association of Colorado. Es-

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entially, the policies enforced the use of district property for official district business only and in accordance with all appropriate manner, applicable rules, operating procedures, and board directives.

A second policy reinforced the use of Donala’s vehicles only by district personnel and only for their authorized purpose. Further language stipulated safe and lawful operation of all vehicles and the consequences of policy violations.

Directors accepted Hodge’s recommendations.

**Interim wastewater conveyance halted**

In an update about the potential interim wastewater pipeline that would serve the U.S. Air Force Academy’s Visitor Center before completion of Colorado Springs Utilities’ (CSU) proposed North Monument Creek Interceptor (NMCI), Hodge informed directors that the agreement between CSU and the Academy would not be signed. He had received a communication confirming that the Visitor Center’s construction met a delay that is likely to push its completion past the expected NMCI completion, which renders the interim pipeline unnecessary.

**Additional updates**

- Hodge reported that CSU plans to repeat its current one-year water service agreement contract with Donala for 2021. Although Donala completed its requirements for establishing a long-term contract, Hodge stated that CSU must finalize its rate establishment process, which should be complete by next fall. For more information, see <https://www.ocn.me/v19n9.htm#dwsd>.
- Directors reviewed and briefly discussed a service agreement between Donala and LRE Water for the provision of engineering and consulting services for the qualification and use of Donala’s current water assets and potential acquisition of new water assets.
- Superintendent of Water Operations Mark Parker reported on the 2020 water main replacement project. With 98.5% of the work complete, only final concrete work and “punch list” items remained.
- Donala’s water demands continued to drop, reported Parker. Production fell 46.5% from October to November. Of the

12.9 million gallons produced, 71.7% came from the district’s wells and 28.3% came from the district’s lease with the Pueblo Board of Water Works.

- The 2021 infrastructure project received enthusiastic support from the affected homeowners associations (HOAs). Parker and water operations staff recently met with HOA representatives to establish communications and expectations about the project.
- Most of Colorado was experiencing extreme drought as shown by a Nov. 24 report. See <https://www.drought.gov/drought/states/colorado> for more current drought information.
- Hodge reported having received a phone call inquiring about the open director position, but no resumes or letters of intent had been received as of the board meeting.

**District honors longtime superintendent**

Directors approved Resolution 2020-8 in recognition of Superintendent Robert Hull’s exceptional performance from September 1985 through December 2020. Retiring after 35 years of service, Hull oversaw

production of “over 160 million gallons of potable [drinking] water” and treatment of “over 155 million gallons of waste annually.” He provided “expert oversight” for Donala’s daily operation to ensure “uninterrupted service” to customers and “exceptional leadership and management for the entire Donala staff” resulting in high productivity and extremely low turnover. George referred to Hull as “the quiet hero behind the scenes.” In addition to the resolution, directors presented Hull with a token of their appreciation.

At 2:35 p.m. the meeting adjourned.

\*\*\*\*\*

The next board meeting is scheduled for Jan. 21 at 1:30. Generally, board meetings are held the third Thursday of the month and are likely to be conducted online due to coronavirus restrictions; call (719) 488-3603 or access [www.donalawater.org](http://www.donalawater.org) to receive up-to-date meeting information. The district office is located at 15850 Holbein Drive, Colorado Springs, CO, 80921. See <https://www.donalawater.org/> to access the current board packet, prior meeting minutes, and the 2020 meeting calendar.

*Jennifer Kaylor may be reached at [jenniferkaylor@ocn.me](mailto:jenniferkaylor@ocn.me).*

**Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, Nov. 16 and Dec. 14**

**New water and sewer rates set for 2021**

*By James Howald*

At the Nov. 16 meeting of the Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, the board heard a request to waive tap fees and some district regulations governing them at a local business park and a progress report on the work being done at the Central Water Treatment Plant (CWTP). A construction change order for the work at the CWTP was voted on, and the board heard a preliminary discussion of the district’s water and sewer rates for 2021. The board opened a public hearing on the 2021 budget, which

would remain open until Dec. 14, and scheduled a public hearing on rates.

At the Dec. 14 meeting, the required public hearing on rates was held. Resolutions addressing the 2021 rates and the 2021 budget were voted on. The board voted on a renewal of the district’s contract with the Chilcott Ditch Co., and the grazing lease with JV Ranch LLC was considered. The board addressed a request to include property owned by Mary Mills in the district’s service area; this issue was related to the board’s recent decision to include property owned by

Mary Mills’ son Jon Mills in the service area. Finally, the board authorized signs to be placed around Lake Woodmoor intended to allow residents to walk on the service roads on the west side of the lake and to prevent trespassing on private property on the east side of the lake.

**Business park requests tap fee waiver**

Stan Sievers, managing partner for Monument Hill Business Park, located at the southeast corner of Deer Creek Road and Monument Hill Road, asked the board to waive the tap fees and tap fee rules associated with his project, blaming miscommunication between the civil engineer and the architect for the fact that the industrial condominium project had been built with a single water meter for the entire project rather than a separate meter for each of the 32 units in the project, half of which are already under contract. Sievers said he had built other similar business parks with a single meter, and that there would be a condo association that would pay the water bills in full each month.

The board voted to approve Sievers’ request, with Director Jim Wyss abstaining.

**Price of improvements at CWTP presented; change order approved**

John Hood of JVA Consulting told the board that Stanek Constructors, the company doing the work at CWTP, had determined its guaranteed maximum price to upgrade the plant to process surface water to be \$2.397 million. That price includes a new pretreatment building and equipment as well as an upgraded electrical system, Hood said.

District Manager Jessie Shaffer said Stanek Constructors obtained three bids for each line item included in the project.

The board also approved a

change order with Stanek Constructors for work it is doing at the CWTP.

**Preliminary discussion of rates held; public hearing scheduled**

Andrew Rheem and Rob Wadsworth, of Raftelis Financial Consultants, the company that advises WWSD on rates and other planning issues, presented results of their 2021 water and sewer analysis.

Based on the information presented by Rheem and Wadsworth, the board considered increasing the water and sewer tap fees by 2%, leaving the Renewable Water Investment Fee unchanged at \$40 per month, and increasing the sewer rate by 2%.

The board was not comfortable with the increase in water rates that Rheem and Wadsworth presented, and asked them to present a new analysis with an increase in water rates between 1 and 3 percent. Rheem and Wadsworth said they would present a new analysis before the board’s December meeting so that new rates could be voted on at that meeting.

The board scheduled the public hearing on rates to be held at the board’s Dec. 14 meeting.

**Public hearing on 2021 budget opened**

At the Nov. 16 meeting, the board voted unanimously to open the required public hearing on the 2021 budget. Board President Brian Bush reviewed details of proposed bond refinancing and the renewal and replacement project scheduled for 2021.

There were no public comments on the proposed budget at the meeting. The public hearing remained open until Dec. 14 so that anyone unable to attend the meeting could comment on the budget with a phone call, letter, or email.

**Public hearing on revenue and rates held**

The Dec. 14 meeting opened with the

**WWSD (Cont. on 16)**



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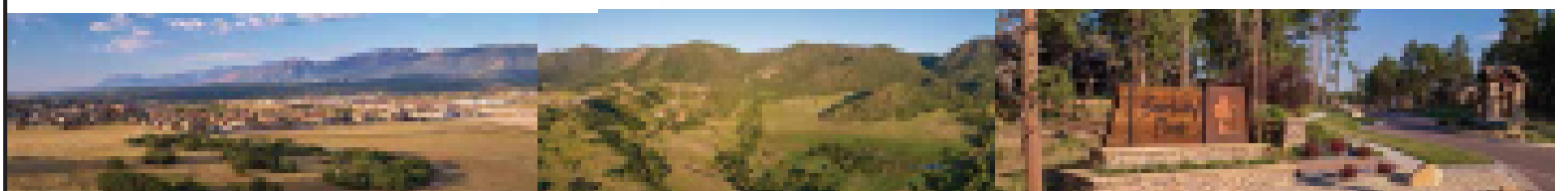
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WWSD (Cont. from 14)

public hearing on water and sewer rates for 2021, with Rob Wadsworth of Raftelis Financial Consultants presenting an updated rates analysis as requested by the board at the November meeting.

Shaffer pointed out that the initial discussion was focused on how much revenue would need to increase to fund the district’s work, and that proposed rates were calculated to generate the needed revenue.

Wadsworth presented three scenarios for revenue increases:

- Scenario A—1% increase per year for 2021 and 2022 followed by 9.5% per year increases for years 2023 through 2030.
- Scenario B—2% increase per year for 2021 and 2022 followed by 9.0% per year increases for years 2023 through 2030.
- Scenario C—3% increase per year for 2021 and 2022 followed by 9.5% per year increases for years 2023 through 2030.

Wadsworth focused in on scenario B, presenting a chart that listed the rate increases that would be required to achieve a 2% increase in district revenue. Residential water rates are categorized in three blocks depending on monthly water use. For residential customers, the proposed rate increases were these:

- The rate for block 1 (0 to 6,000 gallons per month) would increase from \$6.01 per 1,000 gallons to \$6.14 per 1,000 gallons—an increase of 2.2 percent.
- The rate for block 2 (6,001 to 25,000 gallons per month) would increase from \$9.91 per 1,000 gallons to \$10.12 per 1,000 gallons—an increase of 2.1 percent.
- The rate for block 3 (more than 25,000 gallons per month) would increase from \$15.85 per 1,000 gallons to \$16.19 per 1,000 gallons—an increase of 2.1 percent

Wadsworth projected how the rate increases in scenario B would raise customer’s monthly bills for three categories of residential users:

- Low users (3,000 gallons per month) would see an increase from \$99.16 to \$100.18
- Medium users (5,000 gallons per month) would see an increase from \$111.18 to \$112.30
- High users (10,000 gallons per month) would see an increase from \$156.83 to \$158.36

Wadsworth recommended an increase in sewer rates for residential users from \$31.63 to \$32.31.

Wadsworth also recommended that the water and sewer plant investment fees remain unchanged or be increased by an inflationary factor of 2 percent. Shaffer said that he had budgeted for no increase to these fees.

Wadsworth pointed out that at current rates, residential customers are being subsidized by non-residential customers.

**Note:** WWSD has four other customer categories in addition to residential customers. *For a complete list of water rates, see the district’s web page at <https://www.woodmoorwater.com/services/residential-services/rates-and-charges.html>.*

When public comments were requested, resident David Hamilton Smith asked what strategy was behind having a small increase in the first two

years but an increase in following years of 8%. Shaffer answered that current circumstances with COVID-19 and other disruptions to the economy led the board to conclude lower increases would be more appropriate for the time being. Shaffer said the district’s long-range planning runs on a five-year cycle, and the current plan is four years old and he felt that process would create more accurate planning data when it resumes.

Bush commented that a large project was being considered around the end of the decade, but the project was still tentative, and Raftelis had included the potential costs of this project in its first analysis. Then the board asked Raftelis to revise its analysis with more modest increases in rates. The current Raftelis analysis still anticipates the district accumulating the funds for this project, Bush said.

Discussion by the board followed the public comments. Shaffer said he had developed the proposed 2021 budget with the rates from scenario B in mind.

The board voted unanimously to approve Resolution 20-06, which made the rates in scenario B official district policy.

Public hearing on proposed 2021 budget concluded

Following the discussion of rates, the board returned to the public hearing on the proposed 2021 budget that had begun at the Nov. 16 meeting.

Shaffer again emphasized the budget presented in November had been updated with the rates in scenario B included. Shaffer said the proposed budget included spending \$6.7 million out of reserves.

There were no public comments on the proposed budget, and Bush closed the public hearing.

Following the hearing, the board voted unanimously to approve Resolution 20-07, which adopted the budget and appropriated the funds for 2021.

Contract between Chilcott Ditch Co. and WWSD approved

Shaffer told the board that WWSD is the majority shareholder in the Chilcott Ditch Co., and provides bookkeeping, operational support, and other services to the company for an hourly rate. The contract is renewed annually, he said, adding that this year the hourly rate was increasing from \$17 an hour to \$31 an hour.

The board voted unanimously to approve the 2021 contract.

Amendment to grazing lease approved

Shaffer asked the board to consider an amendment to the grazing lease between WWSD and JV Ranches LLC, which grazes cattle on Woodmoor Ranch, which is owned by WWSD. The amendment removes 79 acres from the lease, reducing the land available to JV Ranches to 490 acres. The acres were removed from the lease because WWSD is revegetating those acres as the district was required to do when it converted the water rights from agricul-

tural to municipal use. That conversion required the district to revegetate the land with native plants to prevent soil erosion.

The board voted unanimously to approve the amendment.

Mary Mills’ property added to district service area

In September, the board voted to include property owned by Jon Mills in the district’s service area, at Mills’ request. Mills had an agreement with his mother, Mary Mills, allowing him to use a well on her property, and this agreement required WWSD to include some constraints in the district’s agreement with him in the event he should ever sell his property. Mills wanted his property included in the service area for tax purposes and planned to continue to use the well on his mother’s property. As Mills’ petition moved through the approval process, these constraints in his agreement with WWSD began to complicate the petition for inclusion.

To simplify the original agreement with Jon Mills, the district proposed that the 6.5 acres owned by Mary Mills, which are east of Jon Mills’ property, also be included in the district’s service area. District Engineer Ariel Hacker analyzed the Mary Mills inclusion petition and determined that the district could provide water service to her property if that were ever needed, even if the property were acquired by a developer with the intent to build additional houses.

At the Dec. 14 meeting, the board held the public hearing required by the petition, approved the required resolution, and authorized the execution of the inclusion agreement with Mary Mills.

**Signs to be placed around Lake Woodmoor**  
At its October meeting, the board heard from residents who wanted to continue to use the service roads on the west side of Lake Woodmoor for walking and other recreation. The board also heard from residents on the east side of the lake who were struggling with visitors trespassing on their property to access the east side of the lake.

In response, at the Dec. 14 meeting, the board approved the placement of seven signs around the lake. On the west side, signs will read “DANGER: Property maintained only for Maintenance Personnel, Enter at your Own Risk.” Along the south, north and east, the signs will read: “No Lake Access—Keep Out.” Three private driveways will be labeled as private property.

\*\*\*\*\*

The next meeting is scheduled for Jan. 11 at 1 p.m. Meetings are usually held on the second Monday of each month at 1 p.m. Meetings are currently held at the Woodmoor Barn Community Center rather than the district office; please see [www.woodmoorwater.com](http://www.woodmoorwater.com) or call 488-2525 to verify meeting times and locations.

James Howald can be reached at [jameshowald@ocn.me](mailto:jameshowald@ocn.me).

Monument Sanitation District, Dec. 16

Board approves 2021 budget

By Allison Robenstein and Lisa Hatfield

The Dec. 16 Monument Sanitation District (MSD) meeting was held in person and virtually, however Chairman Dan Hamilton made the decision not to use the camera because online attendees “didn’t need it.” All five board members and the district lawyer attended the meeting in person, while OCN and two MSD staff members attended online.

Paper shuffling and movement in the room added to poor audio quality provided by the microphone MSD used at its conference table. Therefore, most of this article will pertain only to the 2021 budget and the board packet.

**Note:** OCN reporters have been asking the MSD board to improve the sound quality of meetings every month since August. Most OCN reporters are not attending meetings in person per county and state public health orders. See <https://covid19.colorado.gov/data/covid-19-dial-dashboard>.

2021 budget approved

The 2021 budget and funds appropriation were unanimously approved in one combined resolution.

Though not discussed in the meeting, high-

lights from the 2021 budget include:

- Engineering fees increased from \$5,582 in 2020 to \$75,000, which most likely includes subcontracting with Donala for an Operator in Responsible Charge (ORC) in the absence of a district manager.
- Legal fees for 2021 are expected to remain the same as 2020 at \$50,000. Though the budget notes year-to-date legal costs as \$27,875 as of Nov. 23, the year-end cash flow document ending Dec. 16 says the district spent \$59,000 for legal counsel for 2020.
- Salaries and wages are decreased from \$252,129 to 167,600.
- Employee health insurance decreased from \$46,000 in 2020 to \$15,000.
- There is \$168,000 set aside for a portion of North Monument Creek Interceptor project in negotiation and design phase.
- Capital Improvement expenses increased from \$41,777 in 2020 to \$100,000. This is most likely to do with work on Willow Spring development.
- No TABOR reserves appear to be included in





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the budget.

**Donala IGA signed**

MSD signed an intergovernmental agreement with Donala Water and Sanitation District effective Dec. 1. Under the six-month contract, Donala will provide sanitary sewer operations and ORC licensing services to MSD. An additional six-month extension may be requested. MSD will pay \$50,020 annually for Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) monitoring and up to three visits per week to the four lift stations. Additional special work or emergencies are billed at \$97.50 per hour. Background: Since July, MSD has lost District Manager Mike Wicklund and Interim District Manager Erin Krueger. This means ORC day-to-day tasks have been largely completed by GMS Inc., MSD's consulting engineer, but this is not sustainable. See [www.ocn.me/v20n10.htm#msd](http://www.ocn.me/v20n10.htm#msd).

The board continued to be concerned with a 10% overhead charge because the dollar amount

is unknown. The agreement was unanimously approved.

**Dispute over OCN reporting**

The board asked OCN to revise its article about MSD's November meeting, which reported that MSD failed to publicly post its budget before the November meeting. The board held the public hearing on the budget during that meeting. When Hamilton said the board did everything necessary under statutes, contention arose with OCN over how the public was able to inspect the draft of the 2021 budget before the public hearing since the office has been closed for COVID-19 restrictions.

**Note:** The officially approved minutes for the November MSD meeting read, "President Hamilton stated not posting the draft budget on the district's website was an oversight and the proposed 2021 MSD budget would be available for anyone to see." Board members posted a paper copy of the budget on the MSD office windows after the November

meeting.

See MSD's Letter to the Editor, "We expect fair and accurate reporting" on page 22. Also see <https://ocn.me/v20n12.htm#msd>.

The board went into executive session at 10:09 a.m. for discussions of personnel issues and conference with the district's attorney. Upon completion of the executive session, the district's attorney Joan Fritsche said no actions were taken.

\*\*\*\*\*

Monument Sanitation District meetings are normally held at 9 a.m. on the third Wednesday of the month in the district conference room at 130 Second St., Monument. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Jan. 20 at 9 a.m. See <https://colorado.gov/msd>. For a district service map, see <https://colorado.gov/pacific/msd/district-map-0>. Information: 481-4886.

Allison Robenstein can be reached at [allisonrobenstein@ocn.me](mailto:allisonrobenstein@ocn.me). Lisa Hatfield can be reached at [lisahatfield@ocn.me](mailto:lisahatfield@ocn.me).

**Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, Dec. 2 and 5**

**New fire chief selected; 2021 budget approved**



**Left:** The Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District's new Fire Chief Andy Kovacs will be sworn in Jan. 4. Kovacs served as deputy fire chief for the Brighton Fire Rescue District, and before that he was with the Orange County Fire Authority in California for 29 years. Photo courtesy of the TLMFPD.

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) board meeting on Dec. 2, the board approved several resolutions and schedules for 2021 and held an executive session. On Dec. 5, the board chose a replacement fire chief.

Board Vice President Roger Lance was excused at the Dec. 2 board meeting.

**New fire chief chosen**

On Dec. 5, the TLMFPD board met in person at the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development and Visitor Center along with Fire Chief Chris Truty and consultant Mark Risen of Prothman Co. executive recruiters to interview and discuss the final six candidates for the position of fire chief. The interviews and discussions were available to the public via YouTube live feed. See [www.ocn.me/v20n12.htm#tlmfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v20n12.htm#tlmfpd).

The fire chief search process began in August after Truty announced in July his intention to retire at the end of 2020, after serving seven years as the fire chief of TLMFPD. See [www.ocn.me/v20n8.htm#tlmfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v20n8.htm#tlmfpd). After the interviews and board discussions, the board voted 6-1 to accept and hire Andy Kovacs of Loveland as the replacement fire chief.

**Note:** Truty notified OCN that Kovacs formally accepted the position of TLMFPD's new fire chief on Dec. 11. Kovacs will officially begin his duties on Jan. 4 and will be sworn in at a special board meeting that evening. For Zoom meeting joining instructions, see [www.tlmfire.org](http://www.tlmfire.org).

**2021 final budget approval**

Truty said that since the last draft budget discussion, the final numbers had not changed. However, the district received the final evaluation statement from the Office of the El Paso County Assessor for the 2021 property tax assessment, and an additional \$10,000 in projected revenue will be added to the final total budget. Total budget expenditures are \$11.4 million.

The board approved 6-0 by roll call vote the following resolutions:

- Resolution 2020-06, 2021 Final Budget Approval summarizing expenditures and revenues for each fund adopting a budget for 2021.
- Resolution 2020-07, 2021 Budget Appropriations to approve Resolution 2020-0 appropriating sums of money to the various funds and spending agencies.
- Resolution 2020-08, 2021 Property Tax Levy to approve Resolution 2020 levying property

taxes at 18.4 mills for the year 2021, to help defray the costs of government for the TLMFPD 2021 budget year. See [www.ocn.me/v18n1.htm#tlmfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v18n1.htm#tlmfpd).

**2021 schedules**

The board approved 6-0 in three separate motions the following schedules:

- 2021 Fee schedule—remains unchanged for 2020.
- 2021 Wage schedule—includes a 2% increase for all employees with no change in rank differential formulas for 2021.
- 2021 Board of Directors meeting schedule—see [www.tlmfire.org/board](http://www.tlmfire.org/board).

**Collaborative Meet and Confer Plus Agreement**

Treasurer John Hildebrandt said the Collaborative Meet and Confer Plus Agreement with the TLMFPD Local 4319 has been in effect for the past year and will now be extended for two years from January 2021 through December 2022.

Truty said that in the year the agreement has been in place, the district and the union have continued good dialogue and now have a document to reference. "Kudos" to Lt. Franz Hankins for its success, and the union has ratified the agreement, said Truty. See [www.ocn.me/v19.n9.htm#tlmfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v19.n9.htm#tlmfpd).

The board approved the agreement in a roll call vote, 6-0.

**Farewell comments**

Truty said the last seven years had been impactful for him and although he has thoroughly enjoyed his role as fire chief, at times it had been more difficult in some ways than he originally expected. He thanked the staff for being wonderful to work with, and the board for being outstanding and working together as a team and for supporting the staff and allowing him to throw ideas at them, thus enabling the department to grow, making TLMFPD one of the premiere departments in southern Colorado.

He thanked the community and the board for placing their trust in him and for allowing him to take care of the community in a way he thought he could best comply.

Hildebrandt thanked Truty and said that, from where the department was in 2013, he was proud of all the accomplishments that had been achieved since Truty has led the department.

**COVID-19 issues discussed**

Truty said the following:

- A second COVID-19 positive case on shift had occurred and all precautions are being taken.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, fire departments are not likely to be the first to receive the vaccine, but they are included in the first tier of the vaccine distribution.
- The vaccine may be administered at a local hospital due to the ultra-low cold storage requirements for the two vaccines.
- The El Paso County Health Department has been notified of staffing numbers, and a vaccine will be available for each staff member at TLMFPD.

**Executive session—land use**

The board moved into executive session pursuant to CRS 24-6-402(4)(e) to determine positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations; developing strategy for negotiations; and instructing negotiators relative to district property.

Truty informed OCN that no actions were taken post executive session.

The board adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday of each month. The next regular meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Jan. 27 at TLMFPD Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. For information on Zoom meeting joining instructions and upcoming agendas, visit [www.tlmfire.org/board](http://www.tlmfire.org/board) or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

Natalie Barszcz can be reached at [nataliebarszcz@ocn.me](mailto:nataliebarszcz@ocn.me).

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Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District, Dec. 9

# 2021 budget approved

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD) board meeting held via Zoom on Dec. 9, the board discussed two versions and then approved the 2021 budget; held an executive session to discuss a land conveyance matter; and discussed the district’s cell tower property.

2021 budget approval

Fire Chief PJ Langmaid said that, since the public presentation of the 2021 budget in November, there was one last-minute change to the budget for wildland fire mitigation and communications items, and other than that the budget remains unchanged as previously presented to the public, with a total expenditure of \$3.62 million.

Vice Chairman Nate Dowden asked Langmaid what the difference was between the first and the second proposed 2021 budget the board had received, and which one should be considered for approval.

Langmaid said the following:

- Proposed 2021 budget number 1 has been seen by the board the entire time. Proposed 2021 budget number 2 earmarks money specifically in the Capital Improvement Fund Reserves bank account.
- The district has identified the need for an improvement in “communications dispatch” and, given the recent Bear Creek wildland fire, there is proof that had Colorado Springs not invested capital in wildland mitigation the outcome would likely have been very different.
- The district is hoping to find state and federal grants and a matching wildland mitigation grant to use in conjunction with the capital improvements funds to fund both initiatives.
- The board will be required to make the funding allocation decisions from the restricted funds when necessary.

Treasurer Jack Hinton said the following about the budget:

- An additional \$125,000 was

added to the Capital Improvement Fund that could be used for wildland mitigation and a fixed 911 communications dispatch system interface with neighboring departments.

- The money is earmarked but not allocated. With the added \$125,000, the amount rose from \$489,258 to \$614,258.
- The additional funds will be held in the Capital Improvement Fund generating interest until needed, rather than leaving money in the General Fund.
- Any line item within the budget can be moved into another fund if the situation arises, with the exception of monies in the Tabor Fund.
- The Tabor Fund will increase from \$81,126 to \$94,263 in 2021.

Hinton thanked the department heads for giving up items to make the budget work and thanked Langmaid and the staff for all their hard work. Hinton also thanked Secretary Donna Arkowski for her dedication to the fire district, “she keeps us all straight,” said Hinton.

Arkowski said, “You all do a good job.”

The board approved the 2021 budget as presented with earmarked funds, 5-0.

Resolution 2020-13—setting the Property Tax Mill Levy at 14.5 mills for 2021—was approved 5-0.

The approved version of the 2021 budget is expected to be posted on the district website, but as of Dec. 22 it was not evident. See [www.bffire.org/approved-budgets](http://www.bffire.org/approved-budgets).

Disaster resolution extended

Resolution 2020-14 to extend the disaster resolution until Dec. 31, 2021, was approved by the board, 5-0. See [www.bffire.org](http://www.bffire.org).

Petition for exclusion process is slow

Resident Joel Helzer asked the board when the public notice would be given for the public hearing on the petition for exclusion of 22 parcels currently under dual taxation by both Colorado Springs and BFFRPD. See

[www.ocn.me/v20n12.htm#bffrpd](http://www.ocn.me/v20n12.htm#bffrpd).

Langmaid said that until the board has met with district counsel and the board has had its questions answered, neither he nor the board could determine the timeline for the public hearing.

Hinton said research on the properties and a meeting with the Colorado Springs City Council still needed to take place before a notice for the public hearing could be scheduled.

Helzer reminded the board that CRS-32-1-501 does outline that a decision could be made in the absence of an approved district policy on handling non-governmental exclusion of property requests.

Executive session—district exclusion policy

The board moved into executive session at 8:08 p.m. to discuss a land conveyance matter in the district under CRS 24-6-402(4)(b) after the arrival of district counsel, Linda Glesne of Collins, Cockrel & Cole.

Back in open session, Hinton said Glesne had suggested a public work session be held to discuss the policy for accepting petitions for exclusion before the formal public hearing of the petition for exclusion of 22 homes. See [www.ocn.me/v20n12.htm#bffire.org](http://www.ocn.me/v20n12.htm#bffire.org).

Helzer said he respected the board’s need for continued discussion and would reserve his comments until the formal public hearing.

Arkowski said an open public meeting date for the policy discussion would be posted on the district website with 24 hours’ prior notice and Helzer would also be notified via email.

Concerns about use of property easement

During public comments, resident Richard Painter said he was grateful to Chairman Rick Nearhoof for addressing the improper use of his private property to gain access to the district repeater cell tower on Swan Road, which is located on district land adjacent to Painter’s property. See [www.ocn.me/v20n12.htm#bffrpd](http://www.ocn.me/v20n12.htm#bffrpd). He said:

- Sometime during the summer, someone drove through the wooded area of his property and cut the rope fence instead of untying it to gain access to the cell tower.
- The real problem is the placement of the guyed line and anchor system footings, which is burdening the use of his own property.
- After the 2013 Black Forest Fire, he had a discussion with previous board Chairman Rick McMorran and was told the district had plans to change the current installation to a self-standing monopole cell tower and that would have helped with the modifications now needed on his property.
- The records that were held by the current property owners that included a survey of the property from around 1999-2000, were burnt during the 2013 Black Forest Fire and he is relying on the copies of the documents held by the district.

Dowden, partner engineer for Rocky Mountain Group—Colorado Engineering Leaders, said the following:

- I advise against moving the guyed lines and the anchor system, it is going to be optimized for that tower system.
- A cell tower company is not going to waste material during installation and the guyed lines will be in as close as they practically can be.
- A monopole cell tower could be installed; it is just a function of money like everything else.

Painter said he is also an engineer and certainly understands the placement of the guyed lines, and they could all be rotated keeping the same radius and connection points.

Hinton said the biggest thing about moving the guyed lines is the cost. An engineer would need to be involved, and then the easement and the lease would need to be changed.

Arkowski said several drawings Darwin Wooley made of the land when he deeded the parcel to the district in 1976, along with copies of correspondence from legal counsel during the handling of the case between the district and Painter, are spread within the district between the fire chief, the treasurer, and the secretary.

Langmaid said staff members have been instructed to adopt a more neighborly approach by asking permission to access Painter’s property in the future, and he would discuss the access issues with the cell tower contractor. He suggested a work session to expand the discussion.

Nearhoof said, “A work session would be scheduled with all available historical documents, and the district has handled most of the past complaints regarding the cell tower and we will discuss this one.”

Chief’s report

Langmaid said the following:

- Several staff members and family members of employees have tested positive for the COVID-19 virus. The virus is in the Black





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BFFRPD (Cont. from 18)

- Forest community, he said, and he has asked the district staff to be smart during the pandemic.
- The Rosenbauer Type 1 Engine and SVI 2019 Type 1 are currently out of service.
  - The district has received multiple requests regarding cisterns and other development issues.
  - BFFRPD worked on a project with Classic Homes that was productive.

- Planning has been focused on wildland defense with a consistent concern about the persistent lack of moisture.
- The district has three staff openings.

Bear Creek Fire assistance

Langmaid said the district had received a letter of heartfelt thanks from the chief of the Colorado Springs Fire Department thanking BFFRPD for the much-needed mutual aid response during the Bear Creek Fire on Nov. 19. The letter stated that “without assistance from BFFRPD, the impact of the fire could have been far greater to the neighborhood

and community of Colorado Springs.”  
The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

Meetings are usually held at 7 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month at BFFRPD Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Jan. 20 at 7 p.m. Due to COVID-19, meetings will be held via Zoom until further notice. For joining instructions, updates, and minutes, visit [www.bffire.org](http://www.bffire.org).

Natalie Barszcz can be reached at [nataliebarszcz@ocn.me](mailto:nataliebarszcz@ocn.me).

Donald Wescott Fire Protection District meeting, Dec. 1

2021 budget approved as focus is on reserves

By Allison Robenstein

The Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWF-PD) met Dec. 1 for its annual budget public hearing and approved the 2021 budget. The board’s main concern was maintaining reserve balances. Discussion between board members and Chief Vinny Burns regarding salaries ended positively.

Highlights of the 2021 budget

District counsel Michelle Ferguson confirmed the budget meeting notice had been published in a newspaper and the budget was made available before the meeting for public review on [www.wescott.org](http://www.wescott.org).

Chairman Mark Gunderman said he reached out individually to other board members, who agreed philosophically on the direction regarding the budget. Maintaining the reserve fund was important to all of them. “We wanted to shore this up as best we can” to consider any uncertainty 2021 may hold.

Many of these budget highlights were discussed during the meeting, including:

- Health insurance increases from \$290,000 to \$335,000. Executive Administrator Stacey Popovich said part of the increase was because of the addition of new employees. Annual fitness tests were included in the line item this year but not in previous years. The tests cost \$20,000. Burns said the National Fire Protection Association guidelines for health and fitness requires these tests for diseases specific to the fire safety career, including cancer, respiratory, and cardiac testing.
- Burns asked the board to approve \$350,000 in the Building and Equipment line item, however the request was decreased by the board to \$20,600. This covers bunker gear, Station 2 updates including lockers, concrete and stucco repairs, crack and sealing for parking lot, and Station 1 decontamination before the new exhaust system is installed. Gunderman suggested additional item requests may be approved through supplemental budget requests further into the year.
- Director Larry Schwarz asked for clarification on the request for 10 new radios at \$70,000.

Burns said the current Motorola radios will become obsolete once the county updates programming. Battalion Chief Shannon Balvanz said, “Anytime we buy a radio it comes with a charger and a microphone,” so those are included in the purchase price. The district will have to purchase an extra battery for each radio plus a new battery reconditioning unit. “They [Motorola] have the market cornered,” said Burns.

- The board approved \$76,000 for a new Genesis Rescue Systems extrication system. The board was notified at the October meeting that the current system went offline. See Vol. 20 No. 11 - November 7, 2020 ([ocn.me](http://ocn.me)). Replacement parts are scarce for the 15-year-old kit, but if it can be fixed it will be used for training.
- Burns asked the board to approve funding for electronic billboards for Stations 1 and 2. Each cost \$30,000 and would be used to promote events, provide weather alerts and red flag warnings. “We looked at this as a very good way to get our information out,” said Burns. The board agreed to put the money into reserves to perhaps buy these later in the year.
- The Classes, Tuition and Workshops line item increased from \$2,600 in 2020 to \$25,000 in 2021. Lt. Roger Lance asked the board to confirm continuing education is for all district employees. Burns said the money is for anyone who would like to further their education “to prepare you guys for being better officers and moving up the chain and being a well-rounded individual.” He said many fire departments expect incoming firefighters to have at least an associate degree. Education courses must be aligned with the work done in the district such as emergency services, fire service management, or disaster preparedness.

The budget was unanimously approved.

Salary discussions

The board had numerous questions for Burns regarding salaries. “We feel pretty strongly ... we would like to be able to give” a 3.5% raise for firefighters, said Gunderman. In the end a 4.5% step increase was approved.

Popovich said the intent was to provide raises for lieutenants and below. No chiefs are scheduled for a pay increase this year. Burns said that since the district changed the rank structure last year, paramedic pay and lieutenant pay are similar. To compensate for the issue, lieutenants will get a greater step increase than others this year. Schwarz said the lieutenant step increase from \$80,000 to \$84,000 for step two is comparable to regional partners. “At \$84,000 for lieutenants, you’ve exceeded Tri-Lakes [Fire Protection District] right there.”

Burns confirmed even those firefighters who don’t wish to seek promotion and are “happy sitting in the backseat,” receive a step raise if their obligations are met from year one up to year 20.

During the November board meeting, there was discussion to remove a chief position. Part-time Assistant Chief Jim McBride’s position was considered non-essential to the board. See OCN Vol. 20 No. 12 - December 5, 2020 ([www.ocn.me/v20n12.htm#dwfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v20n12.htm#dwfpd)). Gunderman said of McBride’s services, “I have a hard time supporting that and my recommendation would be we do not use taxpayer money to compensate him any further.” All the other board members agreed. Burns said, “I’ve already made arrangements for that.”

Public comments

Resident Mary Gunderman praised DWFPD for its prompt and professional responses. “We so appreciate you,” she said. This reporter noted the outstanding work done on the district’s new website.

The meeting adjourned at 5:41 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

The next Donald Wescott fire district meeting is scheduled for Jan. 19 at 4 p.m. If the meeting is held in person it will be at Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Dr. For a virtual meeting, the phone number is 669-900-9128, and the meeting code is 980 378 2073. Meetings are usually on the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. For information, call Executive Administrator Stacey Popovich at 719-488-8680 or see [www.wescottfire.org](http://www.wescottfire.org).

Allison Robenstein can be contacted at [allisonrobenstein@ocn.me](mailto:allisonrobenstein@ocn.me)

El Paso Board of County Commissioners, Dec. 1, 8, 15, and 22

Approval for residential development on Benet Hill Monastery land; WMMI litigation update

By Helen Walklett

During December, the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approved rezoning and preliminary plan requests for The Sanctuary of Peace residential development on Benet Hill Monastery land in Black Forest. The commissioners also heard an update on the Western Museum of Mining and Industry’s (WMMI) variance of use application.

Sanctuary of Peace Residential Community

At their Dec. 8 meeting, the commissioners heard requests by Benet Hill Monastery for the rezoning from RR-5 (rural residential) and A-5 (agricultural) to PUD (planned unit development) to allow the development of 26 attached residential lots and a lot to be used as a private business event center on land adjacent to the monastery. The 49.9-acre

parcel of land is north of Stagecoach Road, south of Benet Lane, east of Roller Coaster Road, and west of Highway 83.

The El Paso County Planning Commission recommended the application for approval by a vote of 7-1 at its Nov. 19 meeting. Commissioner Becky Fuller voted against it amid concerns about the monastery owning the open space. She felt its ownership should lie with the Homeowners’ Association (HOA) to provide adequate protection for future property owners. See [https://www.ocn.me/v20n12.htm?zoom\\_highlight=%22sanctuary+of+peace%22](https://www.ocn.me/v20n12.htm?zoom_highlight=%22sanctuary+of+peace%22)

Kari Parsons, planner III, Planning and Community Development Department, told the BOCC that, since the Planning Commission hearing, the applicant had met with county staff and had agreed

to make modifications to address the concerns over the open space’s ownership. The majority will now be owned by the HOA.

Dave Gorman of M.V.E. Inc., on behalf of the applicant, described the proposed development as a clustered residential community in Black Forest that would aim to cause minimal disturbance to the existing natural features. The development would preserve most of the property, along with its natural features, in perpetuity with almost 90% remaining as open space. Access would be via Benet Lane off Highway 83. A new road would connect to Benet Lane in two places.

Gorman said that emergency access would be via easements across neighboring land and that this access would also work in reverse, providing emergency access to Highway 83 should the need



arise. The community clubhouse, called a business event center by county staff, would be for the use of the residents and the sisters of the monastery and their guests and would have four bedrooms. It would also contain a garage for storing community cars. The development would have a community water system with one well and four advanced wastewater treatment systems.

Commissioner Longinos Gonzalez Jr. asked why the applicant was not maintaining 2.5 acres per lot, which would allow 20 homes instead of 27 on the parcel. He was not suggesting that 20 homes be built on 2.5-acre lots but rather that the number of homes in the clustered development be representative of the number that would be allowed in the 2.5-acre zoning. Gorman replied that the development was going to be very small and single story and that it supported the innovative water and wastewater system.

Commissioner Mark Waller commented that if the PUD were to be approved, it would allow significant density development and asked what there would be to stop the applicant coming back later with a request for further high-density development on the same parcel? Gorman replied that the covenants and declarations would make it difficult for this to happen and that it is the applicant's intent that the open space never be developed.

Vincent Crowder, property and building manager at the monastery, spoke to address the commissioners' concerns, quoting from the Black Forest Land Use Committee's submission that ended with: "The Land Use Committee does not see this as setting a precedent for more dense development but rather a rational view of the extreme conservation efforts of the Benet Hill Monastery." He said the proposed development more than complied with the spirit of the small area plan and that the covenants would require any changes to the development to be approved by all the owners of the HOA, the sisters owning a 1/27th share of it. Crowder also

explained that the nature of the innovative wastewater system, which disperses the treated water throughout two-thirds of the undeveloped part of the lot, would prohibit further development.

One person spoke against it at the hearing, raising concerns about the wastewater system discharging onto the land and possible fire danger. An adjacent property owner spoke via telephone in support of the application.

The commissioners voted 4-1 to approve the requests. Commissioner Gonzalez voted against them because of his concerns that the development was being clustered on 1.84 acres rather than 2.5 acres, where the latter would allow for around 20 homes rather than 27.

The applicant has requested the administrative approval of future final plats. This decision lies with the director of the Planning and Community Development Department.

**WMMI update on its variance application**  
In August, the WMMI came before the BOCC to appeal an executive decision authorizing litigation against it after events were held at the property that were not allowed uses under its zoning. At the time, the BOCC voted to table the appeal until December to allow the museum time to pursue a recently filed variance of use application. See [https://www.ocn.me/v20n9.htm?zoom\\_highlight=%22grant+dewey%22](https://www.ocn.me/v20n9.htm?zoom_highlight=%22grant+dewey%22)

At the Dec. 1 BOCC meeting, Michael Desmond, assistant county attorney, gave the commissioners an update on the museum's variance application. Although progress had been made, he said more needed to be made to conclude the matter and that staff felt six months would be enough time to resolve the situation. He requested that the commissioners deny the museum's appeal but stay litigation for six months while allowing the director of Planning and Community Development to extend the stay further if necessary.

Nina Ruiz, planning manager, Planning and

Community Development, said that staff had reviewed the application and had facilitated meetings between the museum and outside agencies to discuss matters including floodplain, wetlands, and potential Preble's meadow jumping mouse habitat. She said the county had recently received a revised submission from the museum. This had not included a traffic study as the museum was still working with its consultant on this.

Grant Dewey, executive director of the WMMI, acknowledged that there had been some concern about the pace of the application, saying, "Please know that we are working on this almost daily to keep this moving forward."

The commissioners voted unanimously to deny the appeal but stay litigation for six months, with the possibility that this grace period could be extended further if needed.

**2021 budget**

At their Dec. 8 meeting, the commissioners voted 4-1 to adopt and appropriate the 2021 budget. Gonzalez voted against. He opposed the additional funding allocated for the I-25 Gap project, which he stated was not needed by the state to complete the project and which he felt could be better used to improve county-maintained roads. The other commissioners disagreed, stating that it was important for the county to be seen to work successfully in partnership with other agencies.

**Proclamation recognizing Commissioner Waller's service**

The commissioners recognized Commissioner Mark Waller's service to the county at their Dec. 15 meeting. In particular, he was commended for his work on the I-25 Gap project. He has been the commissioner for District 2 since July 2016 and leaves office on Jan. 12, 2021.

*Helen Walklett can be reached at [helenwalklett@ocn.me](mailto:helenwalklett@ocn.me).*

*El Paso County Planning Commission, Dec. 17*

Rezoning and final plat applications for Black Forest properties recommended for approval

*By Helen Walklett*

At its Dec. 17 meeting, the El Paso County Planning Commission recommended for approval a rezoning application by Rob Haddock to allow the construction of an office building in Black Forest near the intersection of Shoup Road and Black Forest Road. The commissioners also recommended for approval a final plat application for the Winsome development at the northwest corner of the Hodgen Road and Meridian Road intersection.

**Haddock rezoning**

The commissioners heard a request by Haddock to rezone his 4.77-acre property from A-5 (agricultural) to CC (commercial community). The property is on the west side of Black Forest Road, just to the north of the Shoup Road and Black Forest Road intersection.

Haddock, a long-time resident of Black Forest, is proposing construction of an 8,800-square-foot office building, with a 4,400-square-foot footprint, to facilitate collaboration between the executive staff of his family business, Metal Roof Innovations Ltd., who currently work from home. In total, 16 people would use the office, with up to half traveling for business or working from home at any one time. Six others would fly in at quarterly intervals for full team meetings. In spring 2020, Haddock began construction of a barn on the property, which is allowed under the current A-5 zoning. The intention is to repurpose it as a studio to support the business if the rezoning is approved. The manufacturing part of the business will remain out of state.

There was previously a veterinary hospital on the site, allowed via a special use approval in 1985. This was destroyed during the Black Forest Fire in 2013. Since acquiring the property, Haddock has removed all burn debris, constructed berms along Black Forest Road, and begun reforestation and revegetation of the property with the land now a recovering meadow. Irrigation water is contracted in from elsewhere.

The office building is designed to look like a

domestic residence. Haddock has proposed in his letter of intent that a restrictive covenant be put in place that will require all owners to maintain the residential character even if the property is sold and redeveloped by others in the future. The property is surrounded by single-family dwellings. There is a commercial area some 980 feet from the property to the southeast and south that has various commercial zonings. Businesses here include an animal hospital, offices, a retail shop, a gas station, several restaurants, a school, and a wedding venue.

There has been substantial opposition to the application. Rod Dickson, planner I, Planning and Community Development, said the county had received 47 letters in objection, with concerns raised over the visual impact of the proposed development and its incompatibility with the surrounding area. A petition with 517 signatures against the plans has also been submitted to the county. During the public comment part of the hearing, five spoke for the application and six spoke against. Terry Stokka, chairman, Black Forest Land Use Committee, said the proposal's impact would be very minimal and an improvement to the lot. Opposers asked if the commissioners had seen the petition and voiced fears that the application's approval would set an unwanted precedent. They raised concerns over increased traffic, water sufficiency, and the nature of the Black Forest area being changed, particularly if a non-community serving commercial operation was allowed.

Commissioner Eric Moraes noted that the rezoning allows for a number of possible uses. He voiced concerns that the property could be sold in the future and another allowed use under the CC zoning might be proposed, particularly as the county does not enforce covenants. He said he would have preferred the application to have been brought forward as a variance request. The commissioners voted 9-1 to recommend the application for approval. Moraes voted no.

It is now due to be heard at the El Paso Board of County Commissioners' (BOCC) meeting on Jan. 26.

**Winsome development**

Also at the Dec. 17 meeting, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend for approval a final plat request for the first filing at the Winsome development. The final plat consists of 164.4 acres with 47 single-family residential lots, three tracts for open space, drainage and utility purposes, and rights-of-way. The lots will be served by individual wells and onsite wastewater treatment systems. The property is at the northwest corner of the Hodgen Road and Meridian Road intersection and is the redevelopment of the McCune Ranch.

The entire property is 767 acres and the preliminary plan for 143 residential lots and one commercial lot was approved in July 2019. At the same



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time 350 acres were rezoned from RR-5 (residential rural) to RR-2.5 (residential rural). A separate portion was rezoned to the CC (commercial community) zoning district. See [www.ocn.me/v19n8.htm#epbocc](http://www.ocn.me/v19n8.htm#epbocc).

The application was approved as a consent item, although Commissioner Tim Trowbridge did ask for a summary of the road access onto Hodgen Road before the vote. The application is now due to

be heard at the BOCC meeting on Jan. 26.

**EPC Community Engage**

Craig Dossey, executive director, Planning and Community Development, took the opportunity at the Dec. 17 meeting to announce the launch in 2021 of EPC Community Engage, a series of community-focused workshops aimed at giving the public more information on the land use and planning process. The first workshop, “Understanding

the County Masterplan” will be held virtually in February. More information is available on county’s website. See <https://planningdevelopment.elpasoco.com/epccommunityengage/>.

A series of industry-focused workshops is also planned.

*Helen Walklett can be reached at [helenwalklett@ocn.me](mailto:helenwalklett@ocn.me).*

## December Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

December was drier and warmer than normal across the region, continuing the trend we’ve seen since July, with every month during the second half of the year receiving below normal precipitation. Along with the continued dry conditions, temperatures were again above normal as well.

However, the first couple days of the month saw temperatures a little below average with some light snow. The high temperature on the 1st was reached just after midnight, with temperatures falling through the day and staying cold on the 2nd. The high temperature on the 2nd only reached the upper teens even with partly cloudy skies.

Clear, dry, and mild conditions then returned from the 3rd through the 9th. Temperatures warmed through the period, topping out in the upper 50s to low 60s on the 7th, 8th, and 9th. A quick return to winter conditions moved in behind an initial cold front that began to affect the region around 6 a.m. on the 10th. Clouds and cooler air continued to work in through the day, with light snow finally developing by mid-evening.

This was the start of a prolonged period of cool conditions, with several rounds of generally light snow. Most areas received 2-4 inches of snow from the 10th through the 13th. Temperatures stayed below freezing from the mid-afternoon of the 10th through mid-morning on the 14th. But we only managed to jump above freezing for a few hours on the

14th when another surge of cold air moved in and dropped temperatures back below freezing before 1 p.m. that afternoon. The second surge was associated with our heaviest snow of the month, with several inches of wind-blown snow accumulating on the 14th and 15th.

Dry conditions with seasonal temperatures moved in during the next couple of days before another quick-moving system brought about a half-inch of new snow on the 18th. Behind this quick shot of cool air, mild and dry conditions returned. These brought temperatures back above normal from the 19th through the 22nd. This dry and mild weather continued through Christmas and the following few days, only interrupted by a brief snow squall around 7:30 p.m. on the 22nd and windy, cold conditions on the 23rd.

The mild, dry conditions were finally interrupted at the end of the month, as a more unsettled pattern moved in starting late on the 27th and continuing through New Year’s Day. Unfortunately for the Front Range, the series of storm systems moved through quickly, never allowing winds to move upslope and tap into significant moisture. The mountains were able to pick up some good snowfall during the period, and the general northwesterly flow kept temperatures at or below normal for the last few days of the month. After a second half of 2020 that produced mild and very dry conditions, let’s hope the new year brings plentiful moisture as we head through winter and into

spring.

**A look ahead**

January can see the coldest temperatures of the year, but there is often a proverbial “January thaw” where mild temperatures make brief appearances. Precipitation is on the low side, with amounts generally less than an inch. The month offers numerous sunny and windy days with quick shots of snow in between.

**December 2020 Weather Statistics**

Average High	<b>40.6°</b> (+2.3°)
100-year return frequency value max	<b>50.5°</b> min <b>32.6°</b>
Average Low	<b>16.3°</b> (+3.0°)
100-year return frequency value max	<b>22.4°</b> min <b>5.4°</b>
Monthly Precipitation	<b>0.66”</b> (-0.55”, 47% below normal)
100-year return frequency value max	<b>2.82”</b> min <b>0.00”</b>
Monthly Snowfall	<b>14.6”</b> (-3.1”, 18% below normal)
Highest Temperature	<b>60° on the 8th</b>
Lowest Temperature	<b>3° on the 15th</b>
Season to Date Snow	<b>25.0”</b> (-14.5”, 42% below normal)
<i>(the snow season is from Oct 1 to Sept 30)</i>	
Season to Date Precip.	<b>1.09”</b> (-2.34”, 69% below normal)
<i>(the snow season is from Oct 1 to Sept 30)</i>	
Heating Degree Days	<b>1134</b> (-93)
Cooling Degree Days	<b>0</b> (0)

*Bill Kappel is a meteorologist and Tri-Lakes resident. He can be reached at [billkappel@ocn.me](mailto:billkappel@ocn.me).*

## Letters to Our Community

*Guidelines for letters are on page 31.*

*Disclaimer: The information and opinions expressed in Letters to Our Community are the responsibility of the letter writers and should not be interpreted as the views of OCN even if the letter writer is an OCN volunteer. The letters this month are arranged in alphabetical order based on the letter-writer’s last name.*

**There’s no substitute for community helpers**

I would like to give a shout-out to all the community helpers who have done and are doing everything they can to help us all get through this pandemic. From offers to pick up groceries and shovel driveways to setting up Nextdoor groups to trade and barter needed items to combining Christmas displays and food drives, community members have shown a willingness to help others.

Two groups in our community really need our help right now: small businesses and schools. Now is the time to support your local businesses by buying local including takeout from our local restaurants. And now is the time to step up support for schools in any way possible. If you have a high school graduate who is taking time off before their next step or a college student who has come back home and has time in their schedule, schools need substitute teachers to help them get and/or stay open. All you need this year is a high school diploma and the ability to pass a background check. See our local school district websites for more information.

Continue to be the light in our community, neighbors!

**Jackie Burhans**

### Schools need to maintain COVID safety standards

Heading into a new school calendar year, we are hopefully near a turning point with COVID-19 as vaccines roll out. Our local school district has done a good job in a difficult situation—maximizing in-person teaching while prioritizing safety, but now is not the time to relax. We need to maintain these standards until community transmission is low enough, especially with an end in sight.

If you are not in health care, COVID may seem somewhat abstract—or not that much of a threat. The numbers tell a different story. Twice this week, the daily U.S. COVID deaths surpassed 3,400 deaths with-

out much fanfare. For comparison, 3,645 died in the battle of Antietam and 2,977 in the Sept. 11 attacks. COVID-19 lacks the drama and visuals of these other events, which can make it easy to ignore, but that would be a mistake.

COVID-19’s asymptomatic transmission ensures that it is too late to change our behavior once we know we’re infected. We’ve now learned that lesson many times. Instead, we must maintain our vigilance, continuing to follow CDC and public health department guidance for best practices to minimize transmission. I’m glad our school district has shown leadership in balancing safety and the best teaching possible, but now we need to maintain discipline—especially with the end in sight.

**Christopher D’Lauro, Ph.D.**

### Thank you, Monument Academy

As many upper-grade students have been struggling with all-online learning or hybrid learning since March, I wanted to thank Monument Academy’s new middle/high school for working so hard to keep these students in school and in person. My family greatly appreciates how MA surveyed parents, teachers, and students to discover our preferences for a safe return to school this year and how they took to heart our many suggestions and feedback in formulating their plan. Their focus has clearly been in the best interests of our children both academically and in their social emotional wellbeing. On behalf of my middle-schooler, thank you once more for making school as enjoyable and normal as possible in these challenging times.

**Amy McKenzie**

### A student’s perspective

As a Lewis-Palmer High School student, I have benefited from the hybrid schedule. Using cohorts allowed for effective contract tracing and minimal exposure. If I were in classes with all students, I would have been quarantined multiple times. Instead, I avoided every case at the school. I would have missed more in-person time if I had gone to school five days a week. This format allowed me to get the necessary in-person instruction while keeping me safe and healthy. I had a chance to see friends I hadn’t talked to since March and catch up. We were all struggling with the isolation and missing social interaction.

I believe the hybrid schedule also has great educational benefits. Online days gave me a chance to complete assignments for my classes, gather notes from the textbook, and join Google Meet for classes that needed more time. My teachers used Canvas, which makes keeping track of assignments and classwork much easier. Some of my teachers posted online copies of class presentations so we could review them.

All the staff provided great support while I was online. My counselor was always available through email or Google Meet to fix my schedule, talk about online classes, or plan virtual college visits. My teachers helped with my first AP class, finding a math tutor, learning to navigate online tools, answering questions, and providing emotional support, making themselves available in-person and virtually. My advisor for Newspaper helped us brainstorm stories, figure out how to complete interviews, and get photos virtually. My drama teacher helped make theater possible by recording shows over Zoom.

All the staff at LPHS have done an amazing job and have our best interests at heart. I hope we continue this hybrid format to ensure the safety of both students and faculty.

**Zoe O’Donnell**

### We expect fair and accurate reporting

I would like to say that the Monument Sanitation District board is disappointed by the recent OCN headline of the Nov. 18 district meeting. MSD deserves fair and accurate reporting and “failure” should never have been in the title. We did postpone approval of the budget until the December meeting but not at all due to any failure to follow public budget hearing requirements.

MSD’s action was absolutely correct according to state law. Notice of the MSD budget hearing was published in The Gazette on 11/9/20 as required, prior to the Nov. 18 meeting as required by CRS 29-1-106(3) (a), the draft budget was available, and there is no statutory requirement to “post” the draft budget.

*Respectfully,*  
**Marylee Reisig**  
*Secretary, Monument Sanitation District*

**Editor’s note:** OCN stands by its reporting on this public Nov. 18, 2020 MSD board meeting as published.



D38 students need to be in school full time, five days a week

Online and hybrid learning are huge failures for most students. D38 students are struggling without many vital things associated with school—sports, dances, clubs, drama, normal face-to-face conversations and in-person interactions. Students desperately need human interaction in-person. Studies show excessive screen time is harmful on many levels, including developmentally.

The president’s top medical advisor, Dr. Scott Atlas MD, has said the isolation is doing more lasting damage than the disease itself. Dr. Atlas stated, “We are the only country of our peer nations who are so hysterical about reopening schools. We seem to be

the only country willing to sacrifice our children out of fear.”

CDC Director Robert Redfield, MD, stated a child is six to 13 times more likely to die from influenza than from COVID-19, and school closures have led to significant public health problems for the nation’s children, including worsening mental health. “We need to reopen the schools with the understanding the virus is still here. We owe it to the nation’s children to take every action possible.”

It is impossible to make schools 100% “safe.” This is an arbitrary and unreasonable standard. Living has risks—a car accident, lightning strike, disease, or other things. The focus must be the students and their academic, social, physical, and mental health. Counselors locally have noted spiraling depression, substance

abuse and other indicators the mental health of students locally is bad and getting worse every week.

- [www.nytimes.com › health › covid-teenagers-mental-health](https://www.nytimes.com/health/covid-teenagers-mental-health)
- <https://www.sharp.com/health-news/teen-isolation-and-suicide-prevention-during-a-pandemic.cfm>

Focus 100% on getting students into in-school instruction five days/week.

Instead of focusing on long-range planning, the No. 1 focus of the D38 School Board and leadership should be getting all students back into physical school buildings and resuming all normal school activities immediately.

**Scott Saunders**

■

Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

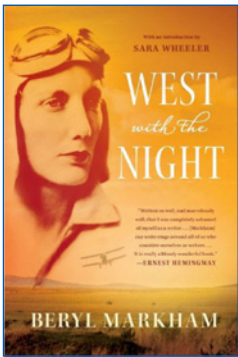
Make a resolution to read some classics

By the staff at Covered Treasures  
“Classic’—a book which people praise and don’t read.”—Mark Twain

Don’t let that be you! These not-to-be-missed classics are great whether you are reading them for the first time or re-reading them.

**West with the Night**  
By Beryl Markham (North Point Press) \$16

This underappreciated classic deserves the same acclaim as the work of her contemporaries Ernest Hemingway, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, and Isak Dinesen. In fact, Hemingway said, “Markham can write rings around all of us who consider ourselves as writers. ... It is really a bloody wonderful book.” Beryl and her father moved to Kenya when she was a girl. She would spend most of her life in East Africa as an adventurer, a racehorse trainer, and an aviatrix. She became the first person to fly nonstop from Europe to America and the first woman to fly solo east to west across the Atlantic. Hers was indisputably a life full of adventure and beauty.



**Watership Down**  
By Richard Adams (Simon & Schuster) \$19.99

One of the most beloved novels of all time, this award-winning timeless classic is set in England. A tale of adventure, courage, and survival, it follows a band of rabbits as they journey forth through the trials posed by predators and adversaries, to a mysterious promised land and a more perfect society.

**A Tree Grows in Brooklyn**  
By Betty Smith (Harper Perennial), \$16.99

From the moment she entered the world, Francie Nolan needed to be made of stern stuff. Growing up in the Williamsburg slums of Brooklyn demanded fortitude, precocity, and strength of spirit. Betty Smith created a rich classic that cuts right to the heart of life.

**The Count of Monte Cristo**  
By Alexandre Dumas (Oxford University Press) \$13.95

A timeless tale of endurance, courage, and revenge, this is one of the best-loved novels of all time. Thrown in prison for a crime he did not commit, Edmond Dantes learns of a great treasure hidden on the Isle of Monte Cristo and becomes determined not only to escape but to unearth the treasure and use it to plot revenge. Dumas was inspired by a real-life case of wrongful imprisonment when writing his epic tale.

**Travels with Charley in Search of America**  
By John Steinbeck (Penguin Classics), \$15

In 1960, John Steinbeck, with his dog, Charley, embarked on a journey across America. He felt that he might have lost touch with the country, with its speech, the smell of its grass and trees, its color and quality of light, the pulse of its people. The result is a self-portrait of a man who never wrote an explicit autobiography.

**O Pioneers!**  
By Willa Cather (Penguin Classics) \$10

Cather’s masterpiece faithfully conveys the sharp physical realities and mythic sweep of the transformation of the American frontier and the people who settled it. A story of people who do not claim a land so much as they submit to it and, in the process, become greater than they were.

**The Once and Future King**  
By T.H. White (Ace Books) \$9.99

This legendary story has enchanted readers for generations. Once upon a time, a young boy was tutored by a magician named Merlyn in preparation for a future in which he would ally himself with the greatest knights, love a legendary queen, and unite a country dedicated to chivalrous values. A future that would see him crowned and known for all time as Arthur, King of the Britons.

**Atlas Shrugged**  
By Ayn Rand (Signet) \$9.99

Larger-than-life heroes and villains, towering questions of good and evil—this is Ayn Rand’s magnum opus. It is a mystery story, not about the murder of a man’s body, but about the murder and rebirth of man’s spirit. This is the book that has made Rand not only one of the most popular novelists of modern times, but also one of its most influential and controversial thinkers.

**To Kill a Mockingbird**  
By Harper Lee (Harper Perennial) \$15.99

No classics list would be complete without Harper Lee’s Pulitzer Prize-winning masterwork of honor and injustice in the deep South. A gripping, heart-wrenching tale seen through the eyes of a young girl as her father, a crusading local lawyer, risks everything to defend a black man unjustly accused of a terrible crime.

Until next month, happy reading.

The staff at Covered Treasures can be contacted at [books@ocn.me](mailto:books@ocn.me).

December Library Events

Library continues curbside service

By Harriet Halbig

In keeping with El Paso County Health authorities continuing at a risk level of red for the coronavirus, the Pikes Peak Library District is now open by reservation only for computer, copier, or printer use.

Face coverings are required of all patrons and staff.

While in the library, patrons are limited to the computer and printer area. All other areas are closed until further notice, including the stacks and the meeting rooms.

All programs including literacy and math tutoring are suspended until further notice.

Curbside service remains available to pick up your items on hold. Please call 488-2370 in advance so that your materials can be ready when you arrive. Alternately, you can text from your car when you arrive, and we will bring the items outside.

Hours of service are 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday and Saturday.

Please see our website ([ppld.org](http://ppld.org)) for a wide variety of virtual programs including yoga, story time, and book groups. There is a new story time and toddler time each week, and previous sessions are available for viewing.

Please access our catalog for book recommendations and offerings of titles to be placed on hold for curbside pickup.

Materials can be returned to the outdoor book

drop on the north side of the building and will be quarantined for 24 hours before processing.

No donated materials can be accepted at this time as the Friends Book Store is inaccessible.

We hope to be able to welcome you back in the near future.

Please note that all Pikes Peak Library District

facilities will be closed on Monday, Jan. 18 in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

For updated information on services available, please see our website.

Harriet Halbig may be reached at [harriethalbig@ocn.me](mailto:harriethalbig@ocn.me).

High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

Local winter wildlife



By Janet Sellers

Our area was once home to many red or gold foxes that helped keep down vermin around the woods and our suburbs, and we always felt lucky to see them dash about, especially beautiful running over snow-covered meadows. Foxes can hear a mouse walking along under 3 feet of snow, and they can gauge pouncing on their prey, diving head-first into snow and coming up lucky with their mouse dinner. It is a sight to behold. Sadly, due to a mange outbreak,

**Left:** A fox is poised mid-air to pounce on a mouse or other hapless rodent under the snow. They use the Earth’s magnetic field and their large ears for catching the sound waves to estimate the subnivean location, then jump and pounce at the sweet spot, hopefully catching their dinner. *Painting by Janet Sellers*



most of our foxes have disappeared but are making a slight comeback in recent years.

Scientists believe that the foxes tune in to the Earth's magnetic field and can judge where the prey is from where the angle of the sound matches the magnetic field. Voles, mice, and other rodents forage under the camouflaging blanket of snow in subnivean (under the snow) tunnels, where they actually stay warm and hidden from most predators. Ermine locate these tunnels and

hunt within them, sometimes taking the tunnels over for themselves.

At my house, we've had some ermine (also called stoats and in the weasel family) in our yard in Woodmoor, and they are fun to watch as they dive in and out of snow drifts. They are very cute, and in winter they are all white but for a black spot on the end of the 5-inch-long tail. They have small, round ears and a triangular head with bright, alert eyes; their body is 10-14 inches long, not including their tail.

When we first noticed one from my art studio window, virtually bouncing in and out of some snow, my art students and I thought it was someone's escaped pet, but we researched and found they are common in our area. Fierce hunters, they dine on animals from mice to porcupines, body-wrapping their prey, then, with a quick bite, kill and eat the many unfortunate critters, many of which are pests.

They can climb trees, swim well and stalk prey in their winter white or

brown summer coats. But they in turn must watch out for owls, foxes, raptors, coyotes, badgers, and humans. We see their fur as prized ornament on royal garb in European paintings, and furriers still use it as trim.

*Janet Sellers is an avid naturalist and ethnoecologist, watching the winter landscape for the local wildlife and the tales they tell by the way they live.*  
[janetsellers@ocn.me](mailto:janetsellers@ocn.me).

Art Matters

# Stain paintings: a fortuitous, incidental art of delicate beauty



*By Janet Sellers*  
*"There are no rules. That is how art is born, how breakthroughs happen. Go against the rules or ignore the rules. That is what invention is about."*—  
*Helen Frankenthaler, American stain painting artist*

These days, people need a respite from their worries and their fears, and making stain paintings as well as looking at them offer that sense of freedom and joy in beautiful colors.

And we see that the mid-century era of stain paintings is making a comeback. Stain paintings are noted for their flowing, blooming effects on canvas, a soaked-in melody of thinned down oil or acrylic colors poured onto a canvas, usually made on a floor and in very large format. The style was basically dismissed as overly decorative in the

1990s but is having a comeback now. They are abstract and expressive, and very pleasant.

Vivian Springford, as an elderly shut-in, was "re-discovered" for her vibrantly colored splash paintings, known as "stain paintings," in the 1990s when a senior services volunteer visited her to keep a tab on her well-being. Springford considered her paintings her children and worried about their welfare should she pass on without making preparations.

The volunteer contacted New York art gallerist Gary Snyder, who snapped up Springford's entire body of work and had a number of robust sales. In the 1950s, Springford had shared a studio with Chinese American artist Walasse Ting and they enjoyed his friends, art luminaries Sam Francis, Pierre Al-

echinsky, and Karel Appel. Springford died in 2003, but when Snyder sold off some of the artist's estate in late 2020 to Almine Rech gallery, there was a surge in interest, and the paintings sold in the six figures.

In an *Artsy* magazine editorial, Montana Alexander confided, "She's kind of a sleeper, and I truly believe that these works will have staying power." Alexander is a New York partner at Heather James Fine Art. "She was developing her own manner of stain painting in the 1970s; she came from that Abstract Expressionist thing but really made it her own. And not unlike Sam Francis, had that East Asian calligraphic influence as well. And then later in life she unfortunately became really private. ... There's been a shift in tastes, and there's a sensuous beauty to

her work that's appealing."

While many stain painters used oils on canvas, making stain paintings can be a simple process. It can be as easy as soaking a paper and dribbling watercolors over the paper, or a more complex method is done on the floor using canvas soaked or sprayed with water and splashed with watered-down acrylic colors. The water-soaked canvas helps the pigments to "bloom" into each other in an abstract flow of colors.

*Janet Sellers is an award-winning artist, writer, and teacher, and most enjoys pleasant, joyful art. She studied ancient Asian art while working in Japan at the Hakone and Atami Art Museums, and contemporary art at Art Center College of Design.*  
[janetsellers@ocn.me](mailto:janetsellers@ocn.me).

## Snapshots of Our Community

### Lolley's Ice Cream opening soon



**Above:** Monument's new ice cream shop will open soon. Owner Shelley Sapp hopes to open Lolley's Ice Cream at 175 Second St. early this year. She's been perfecting flavors and mix-ins for her all natural, gluten-free ice cream that will be made "100 percent from scratch" on site. It's a time-consuming process. Sapp says, "Each batch from start to finish takes about 72 hours." Once the process is perfected, she'll start building up her stock. In the meantime, you can buy gift certificates called "Lolley Bucks" that you can use once the shop opens. From left are Sarah Wehrli buying Lolley Bucks from Sapp on Dec. 4. *Photo by Michael Weinfeld.*

### Comet arrives in Monument



**Above:** Comet the reindeer, age 2, meets visitors in celebration of Monument Small Town Christmas on Dec. 5. Kids of all ages got to see him up close and learn fun facts about reindeer. (Both male and female reindeer have antlers and shed them each spring, reindeer indeed can pull a sleigh, but usually just one reindeer is needed. In North America, the animals are called caribou if they are wild and reindeer if they are domesticated.) While Comet stayed in his corral on Front Street, Santa and Mrs. Claus made the rounds in town to meet shoppers. Comet came out for the day from Black Forest and provides enjoyment at other holiday appearances in Colorado. *Photo by Janet Sellers.*

### Monument Police Bike Patrol



**Left:** Cars are no longer the only mode of transportation for Monument police. You'll now be seeing them ride bicycles through town. On Dec. 8, the Monument Police Department announced it has created a Bicycle Patrol Unit thanks to a grant provided by Classic Homes and Challenger Homes. Members of the unit had to complete a certification course given by the International Police Mountain Bike Association. Officers will ride their bikes through the town's parks, trails, neighborhoods, and shopping centers, making them more accessible to residents and visitors. Members of the unit are, from left, Officer Andrew Romano, Commander Jon Hudson, Chief Sean Hemingway, Sgt. Mark Owens, and Officer James Wader. *Photo courtesy of the Town of Monument.*



# Walking to LPHS, Dec. 7



**Above:** Here are some students laughing and talking as they walk through the South Woodmoor Preserve to get to Lewis-Palmer High School on the morning of Dec. 7. It really made my day to see them. I will never take a scene like this for granted again after the pandemic shut down so many normal activities. *Photo by Lisa Hatfield.*

# Ahoy, Rudolph!



**Above:** Rudolph didn't just light the way for Santa this Christmas. He's also the figurehead for this replica of an old-fashioned sailing ship built in the front yard of a home in the Tri-Lakes area. Lights adorn the ship at night. The ship's railings look like candy canes, and replicas of cannons stick out the sides. *Photo by Michael Weinfeld.*

# Santa in Monument!



**Above:** Santa visits children at Monument Town Hall. On Saturday, Dec. 19 the annual Santa on Patrol, in conjunction with Marine Corp Reserve Toys for Tots, distributed generously donated gifts to disadvantaged children in the Tri-Lakes area as part of an annual tradition founded by Monument Police Department with the assistance of Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District and neighboring first responders. This year, despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the accompanying restrictions, "the event went great and all were happy to see Santa!" said Fire Marshal Jamey Bumgarner. *Photo courtesy of Jamey Bumgarner and caption by Natalie Barszcz.*

# Monumental Impact donates to TLC



**Above:** Tri-Lakes Cares Development Manager Christine Bucher, left, accepts a collection of COVID-19 contact-less tools from Monumental Impact founder Jeanette Breton, right, and Bearbotics Coach Mike Hinkle. Monumental Impact and Bearbotics leveraged their shared resources and skill sets to make these handouts for Tri-Lakes Cares clients. The group has been offering desktop equipment, like 3D printers, to student interns on rotations to help gain project experiences. Contributors to the creation and packaging of the tools were Bearbotics Team member Rob Albanesi, Bearbotics mentor Ben Griffin, Hinkle, and Breton. *Photo courtesy of Tri-Lakes Cares*

# Ice fishing on Monument Lake



**Above:** Just like 100 years ago, ice fishing is fun in Monument today. When the lake stays frozen, ice fishing fans show up. Early residents in the area harvested the ice from Monument Lake and shipped it by railroad back east. Ice fishing is allowed 100 years later, as long as anyone over 16 has a valid Colorado fishing license. For more information, go to [townofmonument.org](http://townofmonument.org). *Photo by Marlene Brown.*

# National Wreaths Across America



**Above:** On Dec. 19, Sherry Miller, local Americanism chairperson of National Wreaths Across America Day for the VFW auxiliary, led volunteers gathered at Monument Cemetery to place live balsam wreaths on every veteran's headstone. At the stroke of 10 a.m. in Monument, in synchronized time across the nation, volunteers began placing the memorial wreaths. In many homes, there is an empty seat for one who is serving or one who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. The mission of Wreaths Across America is to "Remember, Honor and Teach" during the fundraising awareness times and wreathlaying ceremonies at more than 2,100 locations across the United States, at sea, and abroad. This year, due to the pandemic, the usual ceremony was not done, but wreaths were laid in honor of our veterans. *Photo by Janet Sellers.*



## Red Kettle Campaign



**Above:** During the holiday season, shoppers have experienced dedicated bell ringers at business entrances for the Salvation Army Holiday Red Kettle Campaign. This annual fund-raising effort benefits Pikes Peak-area households in need of food, shelter, and other basic necessities. The need for these essentials has been even greater during the COVID-19 pandemic. Traditionally, individuals and families have benefited through the strong spirit of giving in the Tri-Lakes area. Again, our community has exemplified their generosity during these challenging times. On Dec. 21, Salvation Army bell ringer John Howe greets a Red Kettle donor. *Photo by Sharon Williams*

## Stars



**Above:** A photo taken Dec. 21 by Wendy Unwin-Watson showing the “Christmas Star” conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn and the Palmer Lake star.

## Holiday Lights

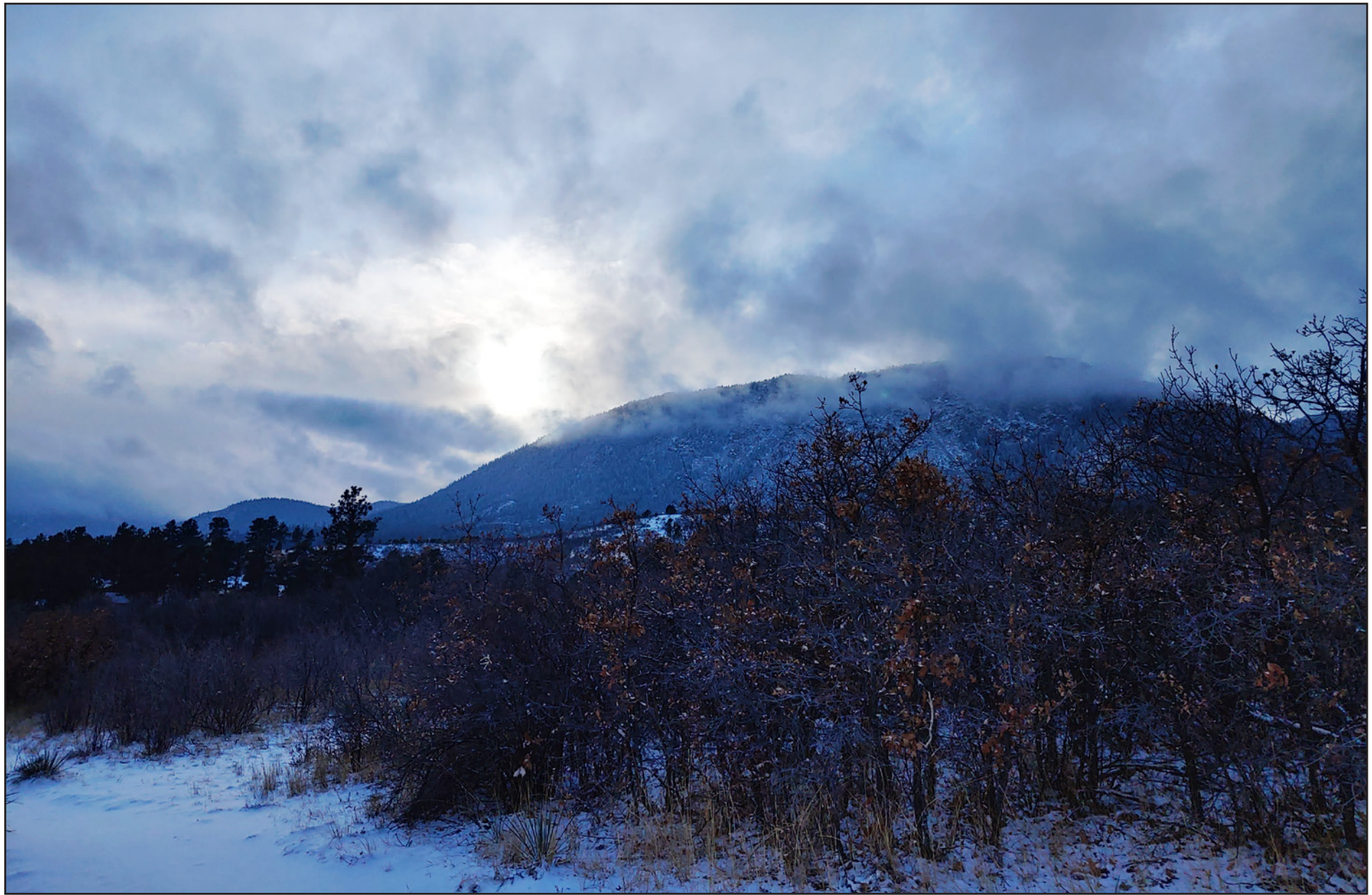


**Above:** In December, this yard in historic downtown Monument lit up the dark nights with 25 deer decorations ... and one real guard dog.

**Right:** These homeowners on East Caribou Drive chose a vintage red truck with a Christmas tree in the back to celebrate the season and cheer up neighbors. Below: One home in Arrowwood III illuminated dozens of Christmas decorations on Dec. 23 including Santa and his sleigh, Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer and the Abominable snowman, Santa driving a railroad train, The Grinch and his dog Max, Olaf the Snowman and Sven the Reindeer from Frozen, and a variety of other snowmen and elves. *Photos by Lisa Hatfield.*



## OCN photo contest winners



**Above: “Moon-like sunset”** - This photo was taken during a December late afternoon snow squall. Dark storm clouds were rapidly flying across the sun as

it was setting over Mount Herman. Upon viewing the photograph initially, people thought it was the moon late at night. *Photo by Sharon Williams.*



# OCN photo contest winners (cont.)



**Above:** “Fun Footwear Yard Art” - In December, while taking my daily walk during snow flurries, I came upon this creative, playful display of shoes among some roadside Gambel oaks. *Photo by Sharon Williams.*



**Right:** Photo by Halsten Barszcz, an LPHS junior, took this photo of Jackson Creek behind Bear Creek Elementary school showing an icy creek and holiday lights.

**Keep them coming!** Send your best “Life in Tri-Lakes” photo to [editor@ocn.me](mailto:editor@ocn.me) no later than **Jan. 22**. Please don’t send more than two photos. Include names of any people in the photo, date taken, a description of the activity or location, and the name of the photographer. Call Lisa at 719-339-7831 with questions.

# And we hear from our readers...

*Our Community News* has a loyal readership, which is truly appreciated by the all-volunteer staff. In light of this gratitude, some readers were asked when they first found *OCN*, where they read it, why they read it, suggestions, and also what they’re up to these days.

**Right:** Claudia Swensen of Monument started reading *OCN* when it first appeared almost 20 years ago. “I read it because *OCN* tells us the facts about what is going on locally. It has civic news, covers important issues we need to know about, and we have such a good cultural life here for our size of a community with lots of art and events that *OCN* covers. I get it in my mailbox and sit on my garden swing and read it all at once, so I don’t miss anything.” Swensen also enjoys the monthly publication’s calendar section. She is active in the community in myriad ways, sharing her wisdom at local libraries and outdoor specialty events. Her vast knowledge of alpacas includes fiber and spinning, and she says, “... Keep an eye out, I might lead an historic tour of Monument including a guest alpaca.” She helps train them for hospice work and expos, taking them for walks to meet people and get used to groups. *Photo courtesy of Claudia Swensen.*



# Why advertise in OCN?

- **OCN is mailed FREE to every resident and business in the Tri-Lakes area.** We mail more than 21,000 copies every month and put another 700 copies in stacks throughout the area. *OCN* has the largest mailed circulation and the third-largest circulation among local newspapers in El Paso County after *The Gazette* and *The Colorado Springs Independent*. We put copies of *OCN* into the hands of those people most likely to buy your products or services: local residents and businesses.
- **OCN is a primary source for Tri-Lakes area news.** Since its founding in 2001, *OCN* has been presenting unbiased, detailed coverage of Tri-Lakes area governmental entities and their deliberations and actions. Credibility is key. Advertising in a credible medium typically rubs off on the advertisers in that media.
- **OCN gives preference to Tri-Lakes area businesses.** As part of *OCN*’s long-standing commitment to encouraging the economic health of the Tri-Lakes area, we offer a significantly discounted ad rate to Tri-Lakes area businesses as a way to help local businesses like yours succeed.
- **OCN’s low ad rates and monthly publication schedule help stretch your ad budget.** *OCN* has one of the lowest ad costs per printed copy of any local publication. Since *OCN* is a monthly publication, your ad is out there for a month—more than four times longer than other local papers. Many of our advertisers tell us they’re still getting calls in the third and fourth week of the month.
- **OCN doesn’t use contracts.** You aren’t tied down. Adjust your advertising month-to-month to meet your changing needs. Our advertisers advertise with us because they see benefit in it, not because they’re bound by a contract they signed months before. To reward frequent advertisers, *OCN* has a Frequent Advertiser Bonus (FAB) rewards program. You earn up to 10% of your ad cost as a reward you can use to reduce the cost of future *OCN* advertising. The more you advertise with *OCN*, the more you save. Thanks to our FAB rewards program, *OCN* advertisers have saved more than \$90,200!
- **You are supporting a good thing.** Your advertising dollars support a unique all-volunteer, Tri-Lakes-focused effort to present factual, comprehensive news to all Tri-Lakes area residents and businesses.

## And the best reason of all: It works!

**Crystal Wright, Crystal’s In-Home Training** - “*I have had the best success with advertising in the Our Community News for my business. 95% of my new clients are coming from this local paper, and I couldn’t be more pleased. If you are thinking of advertising in the Monument area, I recommend you advertise with this paper.*”

**Mike Smith, Woodsmith Custom Creations** - “*OCN is the only paper that works for me. I’ve tried other newspapers, one that comes out daily and another that comes out weekly. Compared to the results I get from advertising in the OCN the other papers are flops. I get a fairly priced ad in my targeted area with calls referencing my ad every month. It can’t be beat!*”

**Randi and Dale Sehestedt, Woodmoor Handyman and Snow Plowing** - “*OCN is the only paper we advertise in and it consistently brings us plenty of good local customers. Great paper and great people to work with.*”

**Mary Sue Hafey, Fringe Benefits Custom Interiors** - “*Since I starting advertising with OCN years ago, it has helped brand my company while consistently increasing my exposure and sales!*”

**Elba D’Asaro, Spa Medica** - “*OCN ads work!*”

**Mike Reaster, Guitar Lessons** - “*Ads in OCN work great for me. I tried other local papers and got no response. Thanks to my ads in OCN, I can work from home and make a decent living. All my work comes from my ads in OCN.*”

**For more information on advertising, go to [www.ocn.me/advertise.htm](http://www.ocn.me/advertise.htm) or contact John Heiser at (719) 488-3455 or [ads@ocn.me](mailto:ads@ocn.me).**



# Our Community Notices

By Judy Barnes, Events Editor

Although we strive for accuracy in these listings, dates or times are often changed after publication. Please double-check the time and place of any event you wish to attend by calling the information number for that event.

### Feeling hopeless, anxious, or depressed? Free help is a phone call away

Everybody needs a little help sometimes. Pikes Peak Suicide Prevention Connection has a support group for young people, Teen Talk Group, that meets Sundays at 6 p.m. The Adult Peers Support Group meets Mondays, 7-8 p.m. The Colorado Crisis Services Line is available 24/7. Call 1-844-493-TALK (8255). For more information visit [pikespeaksuicideprevention.org](http://pikespeaksuicideprevention.org), or call 719-573-7447, or text 719-232-4875, or email [info@pikespeaksuicideprevention.org](mailto:info@pikespeaksuicideprevention.org). If you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency, please call 911.

### D38's choice enrollment window, Jan. 4-Feb. 5

Lewis-Palmer School District 38 provides innovative and relevant programming for all students grades pK-12. In-district and non-resident families may apply to enroll students in a school other than their assigned neighborhood school. D38's choice enrollment window for the 2021-22 school year is open **Jan. 4-Feb. 5**, 2021. For more information, visit [www.lewispalmer.org/enroll](http://www.lewispalmer.org/enroll). See ad on page 9.

### Are you experiencing hardship due to COVID-19?

Connect with Tri-Lakes Cares for assistance with groceries, rent or mortgage, utilities, car repair, and medical assistance at [www.tri-lakescares.org/coronavirus](http://www.tri-lakescares.org/coronavirus). For more information, call 719-481-4864.

### Tri-Lakes Women's Club (TLWC) Virtual Contest, Jan. 14-Feb 14

TLWC is holding a virtual fundraiser, a pet photo contest with cash prizes. The contest is from **Jan. 14**, 6 a.m., to **Feb. 14**, 9 p.m. Enter your cat or dog (\$10 per entry, \$1 per vote) at <http://gogophotocontest.com/whodoyoullovecatordog>. See ad on page 8.

### WMMI seeks volunteers

WMMI has positions for docents/tour guides, front desk, landscaping, and building and maintenance. For more details, contact Loretta, 719-488-0880, or email [Volunteer@wmmi.org](mailto:Volunteer@wmmi.org).

### MVEA Scholarships, enter by Jan. 18

Each year, MVEA awards \$1,000 scholarships to 14 graduating high school seniors. Applications are due by **Jan. 18**, 2021. Apply online at [www.mvea.coop/scholarships](http://www.mvea.coop/scholarships). For more information contact Erica Meyer, 719-494-2654, [erica.m@mvea.coop](mailto:erica.m@mvea.coop).

### El Paso County's Third Annual Winter Hobby Wine Competition, enter by Feb. 1

Do you make your own wine? Enter your best home-made wines in the El Paso County Winter Hobby Wine Competition. All entries must be submitted by Feb. 1; cost is \$10 per entry. Participants must register online and complete the entry form on the website below. Wine categories and more information can be found on the website. All proceeds from the competition and the awards reception will go to the Friends of El Paso County Nature Centers, a 501(c)3 organization, and will support environmental education programs in El Paso County. For more information, visit <https://communityservices.elpasoco.com/hobby-wine-competition>.

### Mountain View Electric Association's (MVEA) SmartHub

With MVEA's SmartHub app, you can manage your account, view and pay your bill, monitor your electric use, report service issues, and receive important notices. Get the app at [www.smarthubapp.com](http://www.smarthubapp.com). See ad on page 32.

### St. Peter School Open House, in-person tours in February

Enrollment begins **Feb. 1**. St. Peter offers in-person learning five days a week, preschool through eighth grade. Visit the website, [www.petertherock.org](http://www.petertherock.org), for a virtual tour of the school. For more information, call 719-481-1855 or visit [www.petertherock.org](http://www.petertherock.org). See ad on page 2.

### The Sisters of Benet Hill offer spiritual direction, online and by phone

People of all faiths are welcome to grow in their spiritual life through spiritual direction. Sister Therese O'Grady will help you find a spiritual director; phone her at 719-473-8764 or email [stherese@benethillmonastery.org](mailto:stherese@benethillmonastery.org). See ad on page 11.

### Sisters' Thrift & Boutique is open

The Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery have a shop full of gently used treasures, including clothing and accessories, household items, and small furniture at 8674 N. Union Blvd., Colorado Springs. Store hours are Mon.-Fri., 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m., and Saturdays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. The phone number is 719-282-0316. The shop welcomes

donations and volunteers. For more information about Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery visit [www.benethillmonastery.org](http://www.benethillmonastery.org).

### Driver and vehicle services available online and at kiosks

Most driver and vehicle services can be completed online at [mydmv.colorado.gov](http://mydmv.colorado.gov). Residents can renew their motor vehicle registration online at [mydmv.colorado.gov](http://mydmv.colorado.gov), by phone at 520-6240, by mail, or by self-service kiosks at King Soopers (1070 W. Baptist Rd., Monument) or at the North Motor Vehicle Office at 8830 N. Union Blvd. (24/7 kiosk). For more information, phone 520-6200 or visit [epcdrives.com](http://epcdrives.com). See ad on page 12.

### Polar Pints at Pikes Peak Brewing Company

When the temperature goes down, the price of a pint goes down! Drink outside when it's cold and save on pints. Check their social media to see if it's a Polar Pint day: Facebook, @PikesPeakBrewing; Instagram, @Pike-sPeakBeer. See ad on page 10.

### LEAP—Help for heating bills

The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) is a federally funded program that provides cash assistance to help families and individuals pay a portion of winter home heating costs. The eligibility period for LEAP runs Nov. 1-April 30. Application packets will automatically be mailed to residents who received LEAP assistance last year at the address where they were living at that time. To find out if you qualify for LEAP, call 1-866 HEAT-HELP (866-432-8435) or visit [www.colorado.gov/cdhs/leap](http://www.colorado.gov/cdhs/leap).

### Polar Express display given permanent home in Colorado Springs museum

The Pikes Peak Historical Street Railway Foundation in Colorado Springs has created a permanent display for the long-time Coleman family Polar Express model train display that was a Town of Palmer Lake Christmas tradition. This tradition started during the 2006 Christmas holiday. It was created by former Palmer Lake Town Councilman Gary Coleman and his son Travis. The new home for this display is the Pikes Peak Trolley Museum at 2333 Steel Dr., Colorado Springs, CO 80907 (719-475-9508). Connie Balcerovich, Travis' sister, arranged for the donation to the museum with a formal ceremony attended by Travis on Nov. 23, 2020. Gary Coleman died in 2016 ending Palmer Lake's 10-year town tradition, but the display is now restored and available to the public year-round. "Now they can actually see it, physically. We have re-created what happens in the movie," said Balcerovich, referring to the 2004 animated film, "The Polar Express." For more information, visit [coloradospringstrolleys.com](http://coloradospringstrolleys.com), [gazette.com/life-polar-express-model-train-replica-finds-permanent-home-in-colorado-springs/video\\_8b2c2281-870d-55a8-8914-6d29eefd461e.html](http://gazette.com/life-polar-express-model-train-replica-finds-permanent-home-in-colorado-springs/video_8b2c2281-870d-55a8-8914-6d29eefd461e.html), or [www.ocn.me/v11n1.htm#pe](http://www.ocn.me/v11n1.htm#pe).

### Openings for Monument's Planning Commission and Board of Adjustments

The Town of Monument has openings on its Planning Commission and Board of Adjustments. For more information, visit [www.townofmonument.org](http://www.townofmonument.org).

### Taste of Palmer Lake, through Feb. 28

This year, your ticket will get you free food or beverage offerings from all of our Palmer Lake restaurants. Purchase your ticket and receive a punch card for a one-time use for your free item anytime through **Feb. 28**. This is a limited time offer. Tickets are \$25, available at all Palmer Lake restaurants, and all the money goes to this year's downtown Christmas decorations. Help light up Palmer Lake. For details, visit [awakepalmerlake.org](http://awakepalmerlake.org).

### National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) free virtual support groups

NAMI's Connection Support Group provides weekly peer support for anyone with a mental health diagnosis. It is facilitated by people managing their own mental illnesses and structured to meet the diverse needs of those with depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and more.

- Connections meets Tuesdays, 7-8:30 p.m. Join via Zoom, <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87298315118>. You can fill out a new participant form at [www.namicoloradosprings.org/connection-support-group.html](http://www.namicoloradosprings.org/connection-support-group.html).
- The weekly Family Support Group provides peer support for family members as their loved ones encounter the ups and downs that come with living with mental illness and working toward recovery. This group meets Thursdays, 7-8:30 p.m. and you can join via Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89344149472>.

For links to the above information and other groups, visit [www.namicoloradosprings.org](http://www.namicoloradosprings.org). Info: 719-473-8477, email [info@namicos.org](mailto:info@namicos.org), or visit [www.namicoloradosprings.org](http://www.namicoloradosprings.org).

### Silver Key senior citizen luncheons and more

Connection Cafe's "Grab and Go" meal clients will re-

ceive three frozen meals for the week; meals must be requested in advance for the following week. A \$2.25 donation is requested. Please call 719-884-2300 to reserve your meal. Meals on Wheels and Home Delivered Meals will deliver frozen meals for the week to Monument on Wednesdays. If you qualify but are not yet enrolled for meals, phone 719-884-2300 or visit [www.silverkey.org](http://www.silverkey.org). The Food Pantry is implementing a "pick up only" model for clients. Mon.-Fri., noon-12:30 p.m., Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy. 105, Palmer Lake. Reserve & Ride is temporarily limited to essential transportation needs only: strictly medical and food-related trips. Reservations are requested, phone 719-884-2300. For more information about senior services, visit [www.silverkey.org](http://www.silverkey.org).

### Volunteer for Tri-Lakes Cares

There are many areas within Tri-Lakes Cares that you can help serve. Volunteers interact with clients, stock the food pantry, distribute grocery orders, process donations, pack Snack Packs for local youth, and contribute in many other ways to the success of Tri-Lakes Cares. Becoming a volunteer is easy and fun. For details, contact Volunteer Coordinator Nichole Pettigrew, 719-481-4864 x113, [VolunteerCoordinator@Tri-LakesCares.org](mailto:VolunteerCoordinator@Tri-LakesCares.org); or visit <https://tri-lakescares.org/volunteer/>.

### Small-business grants available

The Energize Colorado Gap Fund will provide more than \$25 million in small-business loans and grants to boost small businesses impacted by COVID-19. Sole proprietors, businesses, and nonprofits with less than 25 full-time employees can apply for up to a \$15,000 grant and a \$20,000 loan for a possible combined total of \$35,000 in financial assistance. For more information and to purchase PPE, visit <https://energizecolorado.com>.

### MVEA Energy Star appliance and light bulb rebates

Mountain View Electric offers rebates to encourage energy efficiency. Save on your monthly electric bill by replacing incandescent and halogen light bulbs and old appliances with Energy Star certified equipment. Find more information and a Rebate Product Guide at [www.mvea.coop/rebates](http://www.mvea.coop/rebates).

### MVEA outdoor power equipment rebates

Mountain View Electric Association will reward you to switch from gas to electric-powered outdoor equipment. Visit [www.mvea.coop/rebates](http://www.mvea.coop/rebates) to learn more.

### Co-op Connections by MVEA

Mountain View Electric Association offers a free app to find discounts from local merchants. Help keep small businesses thriving. Save also on travel and online shopping. For more information and to download the app, visit [www.connections.coop](http://www.connections.coop).

### MVEA tree-trimming services

Tree trimming helps prevent storm-related power outages. For more information, call 800-388-9881 or 719-495-2283, or visit [www.mvea.coop/tree-trimming](http://www.mvea.coop/tree-trimming).

### Free transportation and handyman services for seniors

Mountain Community Senior Services offers free transportation and handyman services to Tri-Lakes seniors. Private transportation to medical appointments or a grocery store is now provided by Envida, 719-633-4677. If you need grab bars in the bathroom, a ramp to your door, or repair of stairs or railings, please call Cindy Rush, 488-0076, and leave a message or visit [www.coloradoseniorhelp.com](http://www.coloradoseniorhelp.com).

### Palmer Lake prohibits parking to visitors

The Town of Palmer Lake has issued an emergency ordinance prohibiting parking on all town streets, with the exception of Palmer Lake residents, and closing the parking area at the reservoir trailhead on Old Carriage Road during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Silver Key Calls of Reassurance are available for seniors

Extended social isolation and loneliness significantly impact the quality of life and health of older adults. The current public health crisis has increased the need for seniors to receive these critical calls and connection with others. Seniors who self-enroll can be called weekly (one to three times) to talk with a Silver Key volunteer. It offers two types of helpful calls. Social Calls are for seniors who wish to have a weekly, bright, and supportive connection with a well-trained VIP volunteer. Safety Checks are similar to Social Calls, but if the senior does not answer after three calls, emergency contacts (maintained on file) will be called, then the police if the emergency contacts cannot be reached. For more details, visit [www.silverkey.org](http://www.silverkey.org).

### Jewish Family Service offers virtual counseling for all

Jewish Family Service (JFS) of Colorado's virtual counseling services are available to anyone throughout the state who is feeling overwhelmed or in crisis at this time. JFS supports everyone, not just those of the Jewish faith.



JFS accepts private insurance, self-pay, Medicare, Medicaid, and Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and offers a sliding-fee schedule for those with limited financial resources and will not turn away anyone in crisis. To find out more about virtual counseling and the various services JFS offers, phone 303-597-5000 or visit the website, [www.jewishfamilyservice.org](http://www.jewishfamilyservice.org).

**Help protect firefighters and yourselves**  
Hundreds of firefighters across the country have COVID-19. Even with personal protective equipment and strong infection control procedures, hundreds of firefighters are sick. Some have died. Here are some steps you can take to make it safer for firefighters and others on the front lines of the COVID-19 battle. (1) Stay home and practice social distancing. (2) Call 911 for emergencies only. (3) If you do need to call 911, alert the call-taker if anyone in your household has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or has experienced any symptoms such as cough or fever. (4) Make a list of all medications being taken by each member of your household, along with a medical history. Do it now and keep it handy, just in case. (5) Collect a few things a loved one might need if they must go to the hospital. A phone charger, eyeglasses, wallet, ID, and insurance card(s) are great things to include.

**El Paso County services to veterans**  
During the COVID-19 crisis, if you or someone you know needs food, housing, transportation, behavioral health counseling, or employment support, Mt. Carmel continues to be a beacon of support for those who served. Please call 719-772-7000 or email [frontdesk@mtcarmelcenter.org](mailto:frontdesk@mtcarmelcenter.org) to be connected to a member of the Mt. Carmel team. For more information, visit [www.veteran-scenter.org](http://www.veteran-scenter.org).

**Can you volunteer today?**  
Links to local organizations with an immediate need for volunteers are listed on the county’s website, [www.elpasocountyhealth.org/community-resources-0](http://www.elpasocountyhealth.org/community-resources-0), for groups like Care and Share, Crossfire Ministries, Citizen’s Project (email [joy@citizensproject.org](mailto:joy@citizensproject.org) for virtual opportunities to help with Census 2020), blood donations, Early Connections (volunteer from home opportunity), foster an animal, Medical Reserve Corps of El Paso County,

Salvation Army, Silver Key, and United Way (ongoing opportunities).

**Tri-Lakes Cares needs us now more than ever**  
Tri-Lakes Cares is the only food pantry and human services organization located in and serving northern El Paso County through emergency, self-sufficiency, and relief programs. The community-based, volunteer-supported center is a critical resource for our neighbors in need. The best way to help support Tri-Lakes Cares is to make a financial donation. For more information about Tri-Lakes Cares or how you can help, contact Brendan Rhoades, TLC’s Community Engagement Manager: 719-481-4864, ext. 111; [communityengagementmanager@tri-lakecares.org](mailto:communityengagementmanager@tri-lakecares.org); or visit [www.tri-lakescares.org](http://www.tri-lakescares.org).

**Change a child’s story, become a CASA volunteer**  
Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) offers a volunteer opportunity like no other. As appointed representatives of the court, CASA volunteers are empowered to make a lifelong difference in the lives of abused and neglected children. To learn more, contact Uriko Stout, 447-9898 ext. 1060, [urikos@casappr.org](mailto:urikos@casappr.org); or visit [www.casappr.org](http://www.casappr.org).

**Officiate high school basketball**  
Make the right call and become a high school basketball official. Email the Colorado Springs Basketball Officials Association, [csboa.areadirector@gmail.com](mailto:csboa.areadirector@gmail.com), for information on training and certification.

**County seeks citizen input: Master plan survey now online**  
El Paso County continues to seek citizen input in an online survey as it creates the new county master plan. To complete the survey, go online to [planningdevelopment.elpasoco.com](http://planningdevelopment.elpasoco.com). For more information, phone 719-520-6300.

**I-25 MyWay commuting options website**  
Visit [www.i25myway.org](http://www.i25myway.org) and enter starting and ending ZIP codes for personalized I-25 commuting solutions and savings estimates. The website will help you arrange the details and free test commutes, including carpools,

van pools, and the Bustang South Line. The site will run through the end of construction in 2022.

**Sign up for “Reverse 9-1-1” emergency notifications to your cell phones**  
The Emergency Notification System (powered by Everbridge), commonly referred to as Reverse 9-1-1, is a tool that can make rapid notifications to specific geographic areas to alert you to emergency situations including manmade disasters, evacuations, hazardous materials incidents, missing persons, and more. Reverse 9-1-1 is not the same as Amber Alerts, which are generated by a different system. You must register to receive emergency notifications on any phone other than your landline. You can list up to five locations and up to eight points of contact. Sign up at [www.elpasoteller911.org](http://www.elpasoteller911.org).

**Residence vacation check**  
The El Paso County Sheriff’s Office will conduct vacation checks of homes of county residents who are on vacation. This is a great way to add security to your home when you’re away for multiple days. Either a deputy or trained volunteer will visit your home while you’re away and check it periodically. To add your home to their schedule, visit [www.epcsheriffsoffice.com](http://www.epcsheriffsoffice.com). Info: 520-7151.

**Monument text alerts**  
Text “Monument” to 41411 to receive updates and news of meetings, weather alerts, openings and closings, as well as other important town information to your phone or personal mobile device.

**Senior Beat newsletter—subscribe for free**  
Each monthly *Senior Beat* newsletter is full of information for local seniors, including the daily menu of the senior lunches offered Monday through Friday at the Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Highway 105, Palmer Lake. It also contains the schedule of the classes and events for the month at the Senior Citizens Center and senior-friendly library programs. To subscribe, send an email with your name and mailing address to [SeniorBeat@TriLakesSeniors.org](mailto:SeniorBeat@TriLakesSeniors.org). *Senior Beat* can also be viewed online at [www.TriLakesSeniors.org](http://www.TriLakesSeniors.org).  
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Our Community Calendar

*By Judy Barnes,  
Community Calendar Editor*  
*Although we strive for accuracy in these listings, dates or times are often changed after publication. Please double-check the time and place of any event you wish to attend by calling the info number for that event.*  
*The unpredictability of the COVID-19 situation presents scheduling challenges to area governance entities and other organizations. Because OCN is a monthly publication, readers should assume that information published in this issue is subject to change and event information should be confirmed a day or two before the event by calling the information number or checking the organization’s website.*  
*Many entries show dates even though the event has been canceled or suspended. The date indicates when the event was planned to be held or when it would normally have been held.*

- GOVERNMENTAL BODIES**
- **Monument Board of Trustees Meeting, livestreamed at [bit.ly/2uZxjfa](http://bit.ly/2uZxjfa)**, Mon., Jan. 4, 6:30 p.m., Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Meets 1st and 3rd Mon. each month. To participate remotely by phone, call 1-844-992-4726 (Access Code: 126 084 9803). Info: 719-884-8017, [www.townofmonument.org](http://www.townofmonument.org).
  - **Woodmoor Water & Sanitation District Board Meeting**, Mon., Jan. 11, 1 p.m., 1845 Woodmoor Dr., Monument. Meets 2nd Mon. each month. Info: 719-488-2525, [www.woodmoorwater.com](http://www.woodmoorwater.com).
  - **Tri-Lakes Wastewater Facility Joint Use Committee Meeting**, Tue., Jan. 12, 10 a.m., 16510 Mitchell Ave. Meets 2nd Tue. each month. Info: Bill Burks, 719-481-4053.
  - **El Paso Board of County Commissioners Meeting, livestreamed at [www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel](http://www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel)**, Tue., Jan. 12, 9 a.m. Centennial Hall, 200 South Cascade Ave., Suite 150, Colo. Springs. Meets every Tue. Info: 719-520-6430, [www.agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso/meeting/list](http://www.agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso/meeting/list).
  - **D-38 Accountability Advisory Committee (DAAC) Virtual Meeting, live stream on the district’s YouTube channel: [www.youtube.com/user/LPSDCommunity](http://www.youtube.com/user/LPSDCommunity)**, Tue., Jan. 12, 7-8:30 p.m. Meets 2nd Tue. each month, location varies. Info: Cheri McLean, 719-785-4210, [cmclean@lewis-palmer.org](mailto:cmclean@lewis-palmer.org), [www.lewispalmer.org](http://www.lewispalmer.org).
  - **Palmer Lake Sanitation District Board Meeting, call in only: 650-479-3208, Access Code 76439078**, Wed., Jan. 13, 9 a.m., 120 Middle Glen-

- way. Meets 2nd Wed. each month. Info: 719-481-2732. [www.plsd.org](http://www.plsd.org).
- **Monument Planning Commission Meeting**, Wed., Jan. 13, 6 p.m. Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Meets 2nd Wed. each month. Public attendance will be limited to remote attendance. To see the options for remote public participation in each meeting, visit [www.townofmonument.org/263/Planning-Commission-Board-of-Adjustment](http://www.townofmonument.org/263/Planning-Commission-Board-of-Adjustment). Info: 719-884-8017, [www.townofmonument.org](http://www.townofmonument.org).
  - **Monument Academy School Board Meeting, Zoom meeting; email [Board@monumentacademy.net](mailto:Board@monumentacademy.net) and someone will respond with a meeting invitation. The audio will also be recorded and posted**. Thu., Jan. 14, 6 p.m., Lab 312, 1150 Village Ridge Point, Monument. Meets 2nd Thu. each month. Info: 719-481-1950, [www.monumentacademy.net/school-board](http://www.monumentacademy.net/school-board).
  - **Palmer Lake Town Board of Trustees Meeting**, Thu., Jan. 14, 6 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Meets 2nd Thu. each month. Info: 719-481-2953, [www.townofpalmerlake.com](http://www.townofpalmerlake.com).
  - **Wescott Fire Protection District Board Meeting, possible Zoom meeting, check the website**, Tue., Jan. 19, 4 p.m., Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Dr. Meets 3rd Tue. each month. Info: 719-488-8680, [www.wescottfire.org](http://www.wescottfire.org).
  - **Monument Board of Trustees Meeting, livestreamed at [bit.ly/2uZxjfa](http://bit.ly/2uZxjfa)**, Tue., Jan. 19, 6:30 p.m., Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Normally meets 1st and 3rd Mon. each month. To participate remotely by phone, call 1-844-992-4726 (Access Code: 126 084 9803). Info: 719-884-8017, [www.townofmonument.org](http://www.townofmonument.org).
  - **Monument Sanitation District Board Meeting, Zoom meeting. Find joining instructions on the website**, Wed., Jan. 20, 9 a.m., 130 2nd St. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: 719-481-4886, [www.colorado.gov/msd](http://www.colorado.gov/msd).
  - **Academy Water and Sanitation District Board Meeting, the public can join the Skype meeting: <https://join.skype.com/PAcujKTn7Nrh>. Check the website for a link: <https://academywsd.colorado.gov/notices-and-alerts>**. Wed., Jan. 20, 6 p.m., Wescott Fire Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Dr. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: 719-481-0711, <https://academywsd.colorado.gov>.
  - **Palmer Lake Town Planning Commission Meeting**, Wed., Jan. 20, 6 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Meets 3rd Wed.. each month.

- Info: 719-481-2953, [www.townofpalmerlake.com](http://www.townofpalmerlake.com).
- **Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District Board Meeting, Zoom meeting. Find joining instructions at [www.bffire.org](http://www.bffire.org) or contact 719-495-4300**. Wed., Jan. 20, 7 p.m., Station 1, 11445 Teachout Rd. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: 719-495-4300, [www.bffire.org](http://www.bffire.org).
  - **El Paso County Planning Commission Meeting, livestreamed at [www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel](http://www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel)**, Thu., Jan. 21, 1 p.m., 200 South Cascade Ave., Suite 150, Colo. Springs. Meets 1st & 3rd Thu. (if required) each month. Info: 719-520-6300, [elpasoco.com/public-meetings/](http://elpasoco.com/public-meetings/).
  - **Donala Water & Sanitation District Board Meeting, check the website for the access code for the electronic meeting**, Thu., Jan. 21, 1:30 p.m., 15850 Holbein Dr. Meets 3rd Thu. each month. Info: 719-488-3603, [www.donalawater.org](http://www.donalawater.org).
  - **Triview Metropolitan District Board Meeting, check the website**, Thu., Jan. 21, 5:30 p.m., 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 300, Monument. Now meets 3rd Thu. each month. Info: 719-488-6868, [www.triviewmetro.com](http://www.triviewmetro.com).
  - **Lewis-Palmer School District 38 Board Meeting, livestreamed on the district’s YouTube channel: [www.youtube.com/user/LPSDCommunity](http://www.youtube.com/user/LPSDCommunity)**, Mon., Jan. 25, 6-10 p.m., Learning Center, 146 Jefferson St., Monument. Normally meets 3rd Mon. each




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- month. The agenda and supporting documents can be found at <https://go.boarddocs.com/co/lewispalmer/Board.nsf/vpublic>. Info: 719-481-9546, [vwood@lewispalmer.org](mailto:vwood@lewispalmer.org), [www.lewispalmer.org](http://www.lewispalmer.org).
- **Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District Board Meeting, Zoom meeting. Find joining instructions at [www.tlmfire.org](http://www.tlmfire.org) or contact Jennifer Martin, 719-484-0911.** Wed., Jan. 27, 6:30 p.m., TLMFPD Station 1, 18650 Hwy 105. Normally meets 4th Wed. each month. Info: Jennifer Martin, 719-484-0911, [www.tlmfire.org](http://www.tlmfire.org).
  - **Woodmoor Improvement Association Board Meeting,** Wed., Jan. 27, 7 p.m., Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. Meets 4th Wed. each month. Info: 719-488-2693, [www.woodmoor.org](http://www.woodmoor.org).
  - **Monument Board of Trustees Meeting, livestreamed at [bit.ly/2uZxjfa](https://bit.ly/2uZxjfa),** Mon., Feb. 1, 6:30 p.m., Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Meets 1st and 3rd Mon. each month. To participate remotely by phone, call 1-844-992-4726 (Access Code: 126 084 9803). Info: 719-884-8017, [www.townofmonument.org](http://www.townofmonument.org).
  - **El Paso Board of County Commissioners Meeting, livestreamed at [www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel](http://www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel),** Tue., Feb. 2, 9 a.m. Centennial Hall, 200 South Cascade Ave., Suite 150, Colo. Springs. Meets every Tue. Info: 719-520-6430, [www.agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso/meeting/list](http://www.agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso/meeting/list).

WEEKLY & MONTHLY EVENTS

- **Group of Artists (GOA) Meetings at Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA), SUSPENDED,** Sat., Jan. 2, 10 a.m.-noon, 304 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Lively discussions about art topics, general studies on creativity. Meets 1st Sat. each month. Info: 481-0475, [info@trilakesarts.org](mailto:info@trilakesarts.org), [www.trilakesarts.org](http://www.trilakesarts.org).
- **Monument Hill Kiwanis Club Breakfast Meeting, Zoom meeting. email [info@MHKiwanis.org](mailto:info@MHKiwanis.org) for details;** every Sat., 9 a.m., Guests are welcome at weekly meetings featuring speakers on a variety of topics and a free continental breakfast at normal meetings. Memberships open to the public. Join the 150+ men & women of the Tri-Lakes area who work together to make a difference for youth and our community. Info: RF Smith, 719-210-4987, [www.MHKiwanis.org](http://www.MHKiwanis.org). See ad on page 3.
- **Neighborhood Net,** every Sat., 10 a.m. Amateur radio operators practice for emergencies on weekly repeater nets so neighbors can help neighbors. Sign up at [www.mereowx.org/neighborhood-net](http://www.mereowx.org/neighborhood-net) or [contactus@mereowx.org](mailto:contactus@mereowx.org).
- **The Wine Seller Free Wine Tastings, SUSPENDED,** every Sat., 1-4 p.m., 2805 Roberts Dr., Monument. Info: 719-488-3019, [www.thewineseller.net](http://www.thewineseller.net).
- **Bingo by the American Legion, SUSPENDED,** every Sat., game sales start at 6 p.m., games start at 7 p.m., the Depot Restaurant, in Palmer Lake. Proceeds go to scholarships and other community support activities. Info: 719-481-8668, <http://legionpost9-11.org/>.
- **Lions Clubs Bingo, SUSPENDED,** every Sat., 10 a.m., and Wed., 7 p.m.; Carefree Bingo, 3440 N. Carefree Circle, Colo. Springs. Tri-Lakes Lions Club's portion of the proceeds benefit those in need in the Tri-Lakes Community. Info: Jim Naylor, 719-481-8741 or [www.trilakeslionsclub.org](http://www.trilakeslionsclub.org)
- **Lucretia Vaile Museum, closed for now,** 66 Lower Glenway St., Palmer Lake. Free. The museum houses items of local historical significance. Special displays rotate every 4-6 months. Info: 719-559-0837, [PLHS@PalmerDivideHistory.org](mailto:PLHS@PalmerDivideHistory.org).
- **Artful Outdoors,** every Sat.-Sun., 1-3 p.m. and by appointment. Join Janet for weekly art and nature talks and DIY art techniques at local nature and art spots. All ages, good social distancing, masks required, all outdoors for now. Limited to 5 at a time for now. Info: [janetsellers@ocn.me](mailto:janetsellers@ocn.me), [www.StartMy-Art.com](http://www.StartMy-Art.com).
- **Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church, The Table Online Worship livestreams at [tlumc.org/live](http://tlumc.org/live)** every Sun., 8 & 11 a.m. In-person communion service, 9:30 a.m., registration required. Registration & Info: 719-488-1365, [tlumc.org](http://tlumc.org). See ad on page 3.
- **Fuel Church Sunday Service,** every Sun., Connection 9:30-10 a.m., Service 10 a.m., FB Live 10:40 a.m., Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Non-denominational, spirit led. Info: [info@fuel.org](mailto:info@fuel.org), [www.fuelchurch.org](http://www.fuelchurch.org). See ad on page 11.
- **Artfully Speaking Toastmasters, Zoom Meeting ID: 313 403 101 Password: 168997,** every Mon., 5:45 p.m., 4452 North Chestnut St., room 252, Colo. Springs. Guests welcome. Info: Glenn, 719-260-6551; [www.artfullyspeaking.toastmastersclubs.org](http://www.artfullyspeaking.toastmastersclubs.org).
- **Women's A.A. Step Study, meeting remotely, check for details,** every Mon., 6:30 p.m., Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 Baptist Rd. Park in west lot. Info: 719-360-4306.
- **Monument Life Recovery Group, SUSPENDED,** *check the website,* every Mon., 6:30-8 p.m., The Ascent Church, 1750 Deer Creek Rd. This faith-based support group is for those seeking freedom from all hurts, habits, and hang ups. Daycare provided for children under age 11. Info: 719-481-3600, [liferecoverygroups.com/meetings/life-recovery-group-3/](http://liferecoverygroups.com/meetings/life-recovery-group-3/).
- **Monument Hill Kiwanis Bingo, SUSPENDED,** every Mon., 7:30 p.m., Carefree Bingo, 3440 N. Carefree Circle, Colo. Springs. All proceeds benefit those in need in the Tri-Lakes Community. Info: [bingo@mhkiwanis.org](mailto:bingo@mhkiwanis.org).
- **Senior Citizen Luncheons, Connections Café sites will have "grab and go" (prepared meals). A \$2.25 donation is requested. Please call 719-884-2300 to reserve your meal.** Meals on Wheels and Home Delivered Meals will deliver frozen meals for the week to Monument on **Wednesdays**. Food Pantry offers a "pick up only" model for clients. **Mon.-Fri.,** 12-12:30 p.m., Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. See the menu for the month in the *Senior Beat* newsletter. Stay for bingo the 2nd Thu. each month. Reservations are requested, phone 719-884-2300.
- **Western Museum of Mining & Industry (WMMI),** every Mon., Wed., Fri., Sat., 9 a.m.-4 p.m., 225 North Gate Blvd. (I-25 Exit 156 A). Group tours are suspended temporarily. Masks required. Cost: \$11 adults, \$10 military/AAA, \$9 seniors & students, \$6 children 3-12, free to children under 3 & museum members. Info: 719-488-0880, [info@wmmi.org](mailto:info@wmmi.org), [www.wmmi.org](http://www.wmmi.org).
- **Tri-Lakes Silver Alliance Thrift Store,** open **Mon.-Sat.,** 10 a.m.-4 p.m., 755 Hwy 105, Suite N, in the West End Center. All proceeds support Tri-Lakes Senior Programs. Volunteers needed, phone 716-464-6873. To donate furniture, call 719-488-3495 for a pickup. Info: [www.TriLakesSeniors.org](http://www.TriLakesSeniors.org).
- **Tri-Lakes YMCA Senior Coffee, SUSPENDED,** every Tue., 9:30-11:30 a.m., 17250 Jackson Creek Pkwy, Monument. Members and non-members are welcome. Socialize, have coffee and snacks in the front lobby. Free. Info: 719-630-2604, [hbrandon@ppymca.org](mailto:hbrandon@ppymca.org), [www.ppymca.org](http://www.ppymca.org).
- **Adult Children of Alcoholics/Dysfunctional Families Meeting: ACA Promises,** every Tue., 6:30-7:30 p.m. As a child, did you develop a false self in order to survive? See quiz at <https://adultchildren.org/newcomer/am-i-an-adult-child/>. The solution is learning to re-parent ourselves with gentleness, humor, love, and respect. Meeting both in small group in Monument (need RSVP) + online via Zoom. Call/text Stacey 206-384-8285 [www.adultchildren.org](http://www.adultchildren.org) (click on Newcomer).
- **Al-anon Meeting: Monument Serenity, visit [www.al-anon-co.org](http://www.al-anon-co.org) to find on-line and phone meetings** every Tue., 7:30-8:30 p.m., Ascent Church (formerly the Tri-Lakes Chapel), 1750 Deer Creek Rd., Monument. Info: Kay, 719-481-9258, [www.al-anon-co.org](http://www.al-anon-co.org).
- **Essentrics Fitness Program at Senior Center,** every Tue. at 12:30 p.m. & Thu. at 8 a.m., Lewis-Palmer High School modular building across from the YMCA, on Jackson Creek Pkwy. Registration & Info: Sue Walker, 719-330-0241.
- **Peak Reader Children's Literacy Program, SUSPENDED,** every Tue. & Thu., 5:30-6:30 p.m., Monument Branch Library, 1706 Lake Woodmoor Dr. Free one-to-one tutoring for children reading below grade level. To enroll your child or volunteer as a tutor, visit [www.childrensliteracycenter.org](http://www.childrensliteracycenter.org) or call 719-471-8672.
- **Tri-Lakes Church of Christ Wednesday Night Fellowship Meal (Free) & Classes, SUSPENDED,** every Wed., 6-7:30 p.m., 20450 Beacon Lite Road, Monument (Corner of Beacon Lite & County Line Roads). Info: 488-9613, [gregsmith@trilakeschurch.org](mailto:gregsmith@trilakeschurch.org), [www.trilakeschurch.org](http://www.trilakeschurch.org).
- **Al-anon Meeting: Letting Go, visit [www.al-anon-co.org](http://www.al-anon-co.org) to find on-line and phone meetings** every Thu., 9-10:10 a.m., Ascent Church, 1750 Deer Creek Rd., Monument. Info: [www.al-anon-co.org](http://www.al-anon-co.org).
- **A.A. Big Book Study, Call 425-436-6200, access code 575176#** every Thu., 7 p.m., Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 W. Baptist Rd. Info: 719-481-0431.
- **The Speedtrap offers Take Out,** 84 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Take out is available 8 a.m.-2 p.m. daily. Save time, order online. Gifts and gift cards available, too. Info: 719-488-2007, [www.speedtrapbistro.com](http://www.speedtrapbistro.com). See ad on page 5.
- **Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS), check website,** every Fri., 8 a.m., Monument Chamber of Commerce, 166 2nd St., Monument. Info: Terry, 719-684-4912, or visit [www.TOPS.org](http://www.TOPS.org).
- **Silver Center Book Club,** Fri., Jan. 8, 11 a.m.-noon, Senior Center located across the street from the Tri-Lakes YMCA, on Lewis-Palmer High School campus. The January reading selection is a book of your choice. All are welcome. Meets 2nd Fri. each

- month. Coffee & snacks served. RSVP & Info: Sue, 719-330-0241.
- **El Paso County Hazardous Materials & Recycling Collection Facility, appointments required, phone 719-520-7878 or check the website to book online,** Sat., Jan. 9, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., 3255 Akers Dr., Colorado Springs. Open the 2nd Sat. each month as well as **Mon.-Thu.,** 7 a.m.-5 p.m., accepts porcelain fixtures, common recyclable items, household hazardous waste, various electronics, and TVs up to 19-inch diagonal. Bring a nonperishable food item for Care and Share. Info: 719-520-7878, [communityservices.elpasoco.com/environmental-dvision](http://communityservices.elpasoco.com/environmental-dvision).
  - **Palmer Lake Art Group, check the website,** Sat., Jan. 9, 9 a.m., Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. A variety of art programs are offered after the social gathering and business meeting. Guests welcome. Meets 2nd Sat. each month. Info: 719-460-4179, [www.palmer-lakeartgroup.com](http://www.palmer-lakeartgroup.com).
  - **Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group, SUSPENDED,** Sat., Jan. 9, 9:45-11:30 a.m., The First National Bank of Monument, 581 Hwy 105. Meets 2nd Sat. each month. Info: Gail, 719-481-3711.
  - **NEPCO Meeting, zoom meeting, look for zoom link at 9:45 a.m.,** Sat., Jan. 9, 10 a.m.-noon, New Monument Town Hall & Police Building, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. All are welcome to this meeting of local homeowners associations. Info: 481-2723, [www.nepco.org](http://www.nepco.org).
  - **Chess Nuts,** Tue., Jan. 12, 5-9 p.m., Silver Alliance Senior Center, across the street from the YMCA. Any age, any skill. Learners welcome. Drop in and leave when you want. Bring your own board and pieces if you have them. Meets 2nd & 4th Tue. each month. Info: [www.TriLakesSeniors.org/chess](http://www.TriLakesSeniors.org/chess).
  - **Western Museum of Mining & Industry (WMMI) Lecture Series, check the website,** 225 North Gate Blvd. (I-25 Exit 156 A). RSVP & Info: 488-0880, [RSVP@wmmi.org](mailto:RSVP@wmmi.org), [www.wmmi.org](http://www.wmmi.org).
  - **Black Forest AARP Potluck Lunch & Meeting, all in person AARP activities are canceled through the first quarter of 2021,** Wed., Jan. 13, 11:30 a.m., 12455 Black Forest Rd. All ages welcome. Meets 2nd Wed. each month. RSVP & Info: Stan, 596-6787, [www.aarpchapter1100blackforest.weebly.com](http://www.aarpchapter1100blackforest.weebly.com).
  - **Foot Care Clinic,** Wed., Jan. 13, Silver Alliance Senior Center located across the street from the Tri-Lakes YMCA, on the Lewis-Palmer High School campus. A registered nurse examines your feet and provides foot care advice, toenail trimming. Cost: \$30 for a 30-min. visit. Meets 2nd Wed., 3rd and last Fri. each month, by appointment only. Info & appointments: call the Visiting Nurse Association, 719-577-4448.
  - **Bridge, SUSPENDED,** Thu., Jan. 14, 1-4 p.m., Silver Alliance Senior Center, 1300 Higby Rd., Monument. Meets 2nd Thu. each month, Sept.-June. Info: [www.trilakesseniors.org/programs/events.html](http://www.trilakesseniors.org/programs/events.html).
  - **Senior Bingo, SUSPENDED,** Thu., Jan. 14, Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake, after the senior lunch. Come for lunch at noon, then stay and play. Free! Prizes! Meets 2nd Thu. each month. Info: Maggie Nealon, 719-488-3037.
  - **Tri-Lakes Chamber Monthly Education Series: check the website,** Tue., Dec. 10, 3:30-7:30 p.m., 166 Second St., Monument. Free event for members and non-members. Please register for virtual attendance information: [www.trilakeschamber.com](http://www.trilakeschamber.com). Info: 481-3282.
  - **Ben Lomond Gun Club, Tri-Lakes Chapter,** Thu., Jan. 14, 7 p.m., Tri-Lakes Fire Station 1, 18650 Hwy 105 west of Monument near the bowling alley. Meets 2nd Thu. each month. Info: 719-481-3364.
  - **Gleneagle Women's Club, SUSPENDED,** Fri., Jan. 15. Come for lunch, book discussions, bridge, and more. Location for lunch varies. Meets every third Fri., Sept.-June. Info: Syble Krafft, 719-488-2669.
  - **Foot Care Clinic,** Fri., Jan. 15, Silver Alliance Senior Center located across the street from the Tri-Lakes YMCA, on the Lewis-Palmer High School campus. A registered nurse examines feet and provides foot care advice, toenail trimming. Cost: \$35 for a 30-min. visit. Meets 2nd Wed., 3rd and last Fri. each month, by appointment only. Info & appointments: call the Visiting Nurse Association, 719-577-4448.
  - **The Breakfast Club, SUSPENDED,** Sat., Jan. 16, 8:30 a.m., The Ridge at Castle Pines North (Ridge Grill and Bar), 1414 Castle Pines Pkwy. Single people 50+ meet new friends and have fun. Meets 3rd Sat. each month. Info: 303-815-8428, [www.TBC-50plus.org](http://www.TBC-50plus.org).
  - **Tri-Lakes Parkinson's Disease Support Group, SUSPENDED; if you need any help, please call Syble or Barry.** Sat., Jan. 16, 10 a.m.-noon, Monu-



- ment Community Presbyterian Church, 238 Third St, Monument. Come for socializing, discussions on Parkinson's-related issues including available support, and occasional speakers. Meets 3rd Sat. each month. Info: Syble Krafft, 719-488-2669; Barry (group president), 719-351-9485.
- **Faithful Friends, no meeting in January**, Sat., 3-4:30 p.m., 3254 Forest Lakes Dr., Monument. This friendly group engages in open conversation with different thought-provoking topics. RSVP & Info: Ellen, 303-526-5000.
  - **Amateur Radio W0TLM (Tri-Lakes Monument Radio Association), check the website**, Mon., Jan. 18. All amateur radio operators or those interested in becoming amateur radio operators are welcome. Meets 3rd Mon. Check the website for details. Info: Joyce Witte, 719-661-9824, Joycewitte@gmail.com; www.W0TLM.com.
  - **Gleneagle Sertoma Luncheon Meeting, SUSPENDED**, Wed., Jan. 20, 11:30 a.m., Liberty Heights, 12105 Ambassador Dr., Colo. Springs. Interesting speakers and programs; all are welcome. Meets 1st & 3rd Wed. each month. Info: Garrett Barton, 719-433-5396; Duane Gritzmaker, 719-481-2424; www.gleneaglesertoma.org.
  - **Senior Bingo**, Wed., Jan. 20, 1-2 p.m., Silver Alliance Senior Center, Lewis-Palmer High School campus. Masks required. Space is limited to 16 participants; RSVP required. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. RSVP & Info: Sue Walker, 719-464-6873, or email sue@monumentalfitness.
  - **Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7829, via Zoom.com; POC Delbert Zehrung, 559-362-3223**, Wed., Jan. 20, 7 p.m., The Country Club at Woodmoor, 18945 Pebble Beach Way, Monument. New members welcome. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: Post Commander Joe Carlson, 405-326-2588, jcarlson@vfw7829.org, www.vfw7829.org.
  - **VFW Auxiliary to Post 7829, meeting by videoconference**, Wed., Jan. 20, 7 p.m., The Country Club at Woodmoor, 18945 Pebble Beach Way, Monument. Guests are welcome to join; contact carlsonmkc@aol.com for instructions on how to connect. If you are a male or female relative of a veteran who served on foreign soil during war or other military action, you may be eligible. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: Kathy Carlson, 719-488-1902, carlsonmkc@aol.com.
  - **Monumental Impact's Community of Support Collaborative, virtual meeting**, Thu., Jan. 21, 5 p.m. Connect with other businesses involved in technology, engineering, and entrepreneurship or businesses/individuals with an interest in being the Community of Support to high school students in these career pathways connect with others. Info: 719-387-7414, enable@monumentalimpact.org, monumentalimpact.org.
  - **Palmer Lake Historical Society Meeting, SUSPENDED**, Thu., Jan. 21, 7 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. All are welcome. Meets 3rd Thu. each month. Info: 719-559-0837, www.palmerdividehistory.org.
  - **Grief Share Support Group**, Tue., Jan. 26, 10:30 a.m.-noon, Tri-Lakes Senior Center, across the street from the YMCA. The Tri-Lakes Silver Alliance has partnered with Colorado Palliative & Hospice Care to host a 13-session grief support group in Monument. Meets last Tue. each month. RSVP & Info: Sue Walker, 719-330-0241.
  - **Chess Nuts**, Tue., Jan. 26, 5-9 p.m., Silver Alliance Senior Center, across the street from the YMCA.

Our Community News is a member of the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce. Visit the chamber at [www.trilakeschamber.com](http://www.trilakeschamber.com)



Support Our Community Advertise in OCN!

Our Community News (OCN), with a circulation of over 21,600, is a unique all-volunteer monthly newspaper mailed FREE to every resident and business in the Tri-Lakes area. OCN is a primary source for Tri-Lakes area news that gives advertising preference to Tri-Lakes and Black Forest businesses. OCN's contract-free low ad rates and monthly publication schedule help stretch your ad budget while supporting an important Tri-Lakes-focused effort to present factual, comprehensive news to all Tri-Lakes area residents and business owners.

For advertising information, contact John Heiser, (719) 488-3455, [ads@ocn.me](mailto:ads@ocn.me), or visit [www.ocn.me](http://www.ocn.me).

- Any age, any skill. Learners welcome. Drop in and leave when you want. Bring your own board and pieces if you have them. Meets 2nd & 4th Tue. each month. Info: [www.TriLakesSeniors.org/chess](http://www.TriLakesSeniors.org/chess).
- **Friends of Fox Run Park, SUSPENDED**, Thu., Jan. 28, 5:30 p.m., Southwinds Fine Art Gallery upstairs, 16575 Rollercoaster Rd. (corner of Baptist and Rollercoaster Roads). Join the growing group to learn about volunteering and supporting the park for safety, trails, trees, education, more. Guest speaker each month. Meets 4th Thu. each month. Info: 719-492-0355, janetsellers@ocn.me.
  - **Senior Social, all in person AARP activities are canceled through the first quarter of 2021**, Wed., Jan. 27, 1-4 p.m., 12455 Black Forest Rd. Meets 4th Wed. each month except Nov. & Dec. Info: [aarp-chapter1100blackforest.weebly.com](http://aarp-chapter1100blackforest.weebly.com).
  - **Foot Care Clinic**, Fri., Jan. 29, Silver Alliance Senior Center located across the street from the Tri-Lakes YMCA, on the Lewis-Palmer High School campus. A registered nurse examines feet and provides foot care advice, toenail trimming. Cost: \$35 for a 30-min. visit. Meets 2nd Wed., 3rd and last Fri. each month, by appointment only. Info & appointments: call the Visiting Nurse Association, 719-577-4448.
  - **Group of Artists (GOA) Meetings at Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA), SUSPENDED**, Sat., Feb. 6, 10 a.m.-noon, 304 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Lively discussions about art topics, general studies on creativity. Meets 1st Sat. each month. Info: 481-0475, [info@trilakesarts.org](mailto:info@trilakesarts.org), [www.trilakesarts.org](http://www.trilakesarts.org).
  - **Lupus Support Group**. If you suffer with an autoimmune disease and want to connect with others, you are welcome to join this group. Info: [dmbandle@hotmail.com](mailto:dmbandle@hotmail.com).
  - **Myasthenia Gravis Association of Colorado Support Group**. Location varies. Info: Carolyn, 488-3620, [www.4-mga.org](http://www.4-mga.org), 303-360-7080, [4mga@4-mga.org](mailto:4mga@4-mga.org).

SPECIAL EVENTS

- **County's Annual TreeCycle**, Sat.-Sun., Jan. 2-3, or Jan. 9-10, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Baptist Road trailhead, Baptist Road & Old Denver Hwy. Recycle your Christmas tree. Trees are ground into mulch. Remove all decorations from your tree before dropping it off. Cost: \$5, benefits community youth sports programs. Info: 520-7878, [www.csyouthsports.net/treecycle](http://www.csyouthsports.net/treecycle).

Content

Articles in Our Community News focus on the deliberations of Tri-Lakes area governmental bodies such as the Monument Board of Trustees, Palmer Lake Town Council, and many of the local water, sanitation, fire, and school district boards.

Unlike papers that try to figure out what the "story" is and then get quotes on each side to presumably lead the reader to conclude what the "truth" is, OCN's role is to report in detail on public meetings of local governmental entities. We report what was talked about and what was decided. By reading OCN, you can find out what you might have learned if you had attended those public meetings. In this context, "truth" is that the articles accurately represent what transpired at the meetings.

The content of ads, inserts, and letters to the editor in OCN is solely the responsibility of the advertisers and authors who place those ads, inserts, and letters. The appearance of an ad, insert, or letter in OCN does not imply endorsement of the ad, insert, or letter's content or purpose. While OCN does not knowingly run false ads, inserts, or letters, we do not research the accuracy of that content. Readers are encouraged to do their own research prior to committing to use the products or services offered or accept the conclusions of letters to the editor. Readers with concerns about the content of an ad, insert, or letter should take up those concerns with the advertiser or author.

Contact John Heiser, Publisher, at [johnheiser@ocn.me](mailto:johnheiser@ocn.me) or (719) 488-3455 with any questions.

Support Our Community. Volunteer with OCN!

Please join us today! Meet a group of interesting and committed people. Learn new skills—use your enthusiasm and creativity to benefit our community and celebrate unfiltered information. Please call John Heiser, Publisher, at (719) 488-3455, or email [johnheiser@ocn.me](mailto:johnheiser@ocn.me) to see how you can contribute. Contact us today!

Our community calendar carries listings on a space-available basis for Tri-Lakes events that are sponsored by local governmental entities and not-for-profit organizations. We include events that are open to the general public and are not religious or self-promotional in nature. If space is available, complimentary calendar listings are included, when requested, for events advertised in the current issue. To have your event listed at no charge in Our Community Calendar, please call (719) 339-7831 or send the information to [calendar@ocn.me](mailto:calendar@ocn.me) or Our Community News, P.O. Box 1742, Monument, Colorado 80132.

Letters to Our Community

Our Community News welcomes letters to the editor on topics of general interest to readers in the Tri-Lakes area. We do not knowingly print letters that are substantially the same as letters that have been submitted to other publications. To ensure that OCN contains a variety of viewpoints, each letter writer is limited to a maximum of one (1) letter per issue and six (6) letters within a twelve (12) month period. To submit a letter, please:

- Email your letter, preferably as an attached Microsoft Word document, to [editor@ocn.me](mailto:editor@ocn.me) or mail a copy to **Our Community News, P.O. Box 1742, Monument, CO 80132-1742**.
- Identify your submission as a letter to the editor and confirm that it has not been submitted to any other publication.
- Include a suggested headline or title that summarizes the topic you are addressing.
- Limit your letter to no more than 300 words including your suggested headline and closing.
- Include your full name, home address, phone numbers, and email address, if you have one. Only your name will be published.
- Submit your letter so we receive it no later than midnight, Friday, two weeks prior to the publication date.

If you have not received an acknowledgement two days after your email submission or one week after you mailed your letter, please contact Jennifer Kaylor, Managing Editor, at (719) 488-3455 or [editor@ocn.me](mailto:editor@ocn.me). At OCN's sole discretion, we may ask you for clarification of your statements. Include references, such as website links, in your letter for any facts and figures you cite. OCN does not guarantee every letter will appear in print or on-line and does not guarantee a publication date. Depending on the space available, the number of letters printed in an issue may be limited to the first 12 received. Letters containing personal attacks or endorsements for or complaints about individually-named commercial products or services will not be published.

Look for our next issue Saturday, Feb. 6

Ad space reservations due: **Fri., Jan. 15**  
Finished ad artwork due: **Fri., Jan. 22**  
Letters to the editor due: **Fri., Jan. 22**  
Calendar items due: **Fri., Jan. 29**

Visit our website to read, download, and search all the back issues at [WWW.OCN.ME](http://WWW.OCN.ME)



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For advertising information, contact  
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Did you know that our advertisers are the reason *Our Community News* is mailed FREE to the entire Tri-Lakes community?

Our mailed circulation each month exceeds 21,000. We also place another 700 papers each month in stacks at local businesses.

Our advertisers willingness to advertise in OCN makes free distribution of this newspaper possible. Please let them know you saw their ad in OCN when patronizing their business!

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