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Local Events

Readers should assume that event information published in this issue is subject to change and information should be confirmed a day or two before the event by calling the information number or checking the organization's website.

See pages 25-27 for event locations and other details of these and many other local events.

- OCN mailing days, Thu., Oct. 5 & Nov. 2, approx. 9 am-2 pm.
- Pikes Peak Brewing Company Pop-up Smokehouse, every Fri., & Sat. until it's gone. See ad on page 2.
- Romance at the Chautauqua, play, Fri. & Sun., Oct 6 & 8.
- WMMI Miner's pumpkin patch, every Sat. in Oct. See ad on page 9.
- Take a Kid Mountain Biking Day, Sat., Oct. 7, 9 am
- Meet your firefighters event, Sat., Oct. 7, 11-2 pm.
- PTSD: What You See, Feel, Do About it, Sun., Oct. 8, 1-3 p.m
- MVEA Member appreciation day, Wed., Oct. 11, 11 am-1 pm.
- Annual pumpkin giveaway! Sat., Oct. 14, 10 am-2 pm.
- Kiwanis Fundraiser wine and dining, Sun., Oct. 15. 1-4 pm. See ad on page 3.
- Lifting Spirits Going Out of Business Sale, Mon.-Thu., Oct. 16-26. See ad on page 8.
- Love Shop Restyle Your Fur Event, Mon.-Tue., Oct. 16-17. See ad on page 8.
- 100+ Women Who Care Bi-Annual Meeting, Wed., Oct. 18, 5 pm.
- D38 Fundraiser Dream Team vs Harlem Wizards, Wed., Oct. 18, 7-9 pm. See ad on page 9.
- AARP Drivers Safety Class, Thu., Oct. 26, 12 - 4 pm
- St. Peter Catholic School Trunk or Treat, Fri., Oct. 27, 5-7 pm.
- YMCA 5K Creepy crawl, Sat., Oct. 28. See ad on page 6.
- Front Range Maker's Market, Sat.-Sun., Oct. 28 - 29. See ad on page 28.

Right: A powered paraglider flies over Monument Rock and the Mount Herman Trail in the early morning Sept. 8. *Photo by Chris Jeub.*



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Print Run: 23,480
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Fox Run Regional Park Lantern Festival, Sept. 22



Above: El Paso County Community Services hosted the September Water Lantern Festival at Fox Run Regional Park on Sept. 22. The festival was dog friendly with a dog costume contest and featured lights, music, food trucks, and more. As people gathered along the shoreline of the pond, the moon rose and at dusk they launched their decorated lanterns. Ryan Dorough, Recreation and Cultural Services program planner, said it was very successful lantern launch. For more events at area El Paso County parks, go to <http://communityservices.elpasoco.com/parks-and-recreation/>. *Photo by Marlene Brown.*

El Paso Board of County Commissioners, Aug. 29 and Sept. 14, 26, and 28

Approvals for the Flying Horse North service plan and increased parking at Pumpkin Patch

By Helen Walklett

During September, the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approved the Flying Horse North (FHN) service plan with a total debt cap of \$400 million, the largest of any El Paso County metro district. It also heard a special use application from Colorado Pumpkin Patch to increase the allowed parking numbers at its pumpkin patch. The commissioners also made decisions relating to a Tri-Lakes area property and received a Tri-Lakes Cares update.

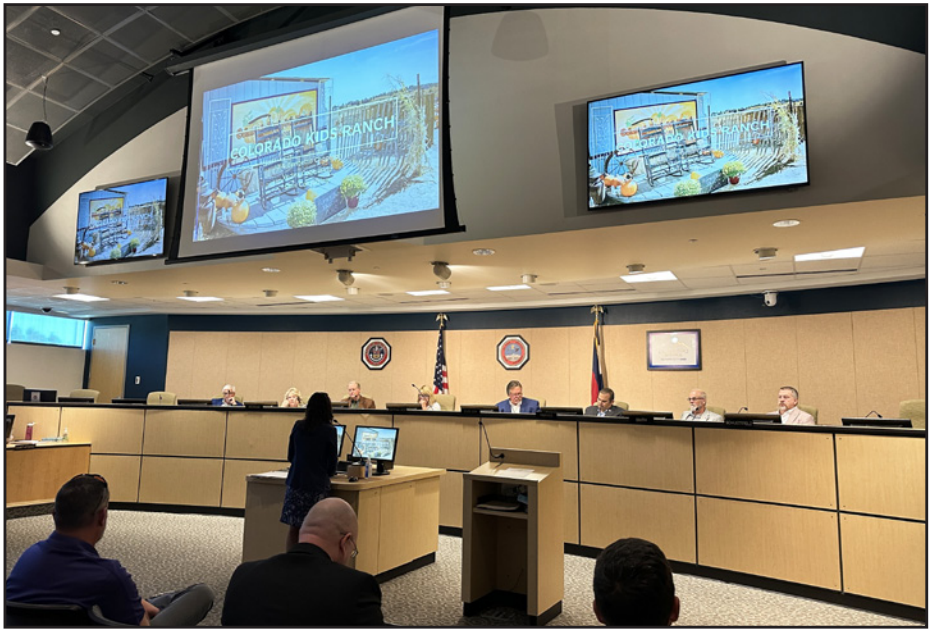
Flying Horse North service plan

At the Sept. 28 BOCC land use meeting, the commissioners voted to approve the service plan for FHN Metropolitan Districts Nos. 1-5.

The application came to the BOCC from the Aug. 3 El Paso County Planning Commission hearing with a 5-3 vote recommending approval. The commissioners opposed at that meeting questioned the district's financial ability to discharge the proposed indebtedness on a reasonable basis.

The 910-acre area covered by the plan is the property for which a revised sketch plan was approved in November 2022. See <https://www.ocn.me/v22n12.htm#epbocc>.

Attorney Russ Dykstra, partner,



Above: Arguments were made both for and against the Colorado Pumpkin Patch's proposed increase of parking space to accommodate its growing popularity at the Sept. 7 El Paso County Planning Commission meeting. The Planning Commission voted it down, but the El Paso Board of County Commissioners voted on Sept. 14 to allow the increase in parking as well as open a discussion to perhaps allow access to Highway 105. *Photo by Chris Jeub.*

Spencer Fane, representing the applicants, said they had taken the Planning Commission's concerns very seriously and had revised the financial plan after further analysis, reducing the esti-

mated home values for the hotel and custom lot single-family homes to \$3.5 million and the branded flats to \$2.5

BOCC (Cont. on 2)

Monument Fire District, Sept. 27

Fleet purchase approved; budget impact of Nov. ballot items; community paramedic proposed

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Monument Fire District (MFD) meeting on Sept. 27, the board approved two new engines, received the first presentation of the proposed 2024 budget, and heard about a proposed community paramedic concept.

President Mike Smaldino was excused.

Two engines approved

Secretary Jason Buckingham requested the board approve resolution 2023-05 of the Board of Directors of a lease-purchase agreement with PNC Equipment Finance LLC for the financing of two new Pierce Velocity Pumper Engines and authorizing the execution and delivery of them. See www.ocn.me/v23n9.htm#mfd.

Division Chief of Administration/Fire Marshal Jamey Bumgarner said that nothing in the original proposal presented at the August board meeting had changed, and the delivery is estimated to be in 2025. The total for the two engines is estimated to be about \$1.712 million.

The board approved the resolution, 6-0.

2024 budget presentation

Fire Chief Andy Kovacs presented the first look at the proposed 2024 budget and said:

- The county assessor provided the assessed valuation numbers for the property tax revenue for 2024,

with and without the passing of Proposition HH. (Proposition HH is a question on the November ballot proposing a statewide bill that would implement property tax reductions and allow the state to retain and spend excess state revenue.)

- If Resolution HH fails, the state Legislature is already working on another tax measure for 2024. Initiative 50 would put a 4% cap on revenue and continue to impact special districts.
- The district estimates about \$15.1 million in property tax revenue

MFD (Cont. on 7)

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BOCC (Cont. from 1)

million. As a result, the maximum authorized debt limit had been reduced

from \$450 million to \$400 million to reflect the reduced estimated debt capacity of the districts. The buildout has been extended from six to 11 years to address potential slowdowns in construction of the project. The service plan includes a debt service mill levy of 50 mills for commercial and residential property, and an operations and maintenance mill levy of 15 mills, for a total maximum combined mill levy of 65 mills.

Kari Parsons, senior planner, Planning and Community Development Department, said the statutory purposes of the district would be very standard and would include street improvements, the design, construction, and maintenance of drainage, sanitation, and recreation facilities, and covenant enforcement.

The residential portion of the development is about 844 acres and will be located in districts 2-4 with the commercial development being located in 1 and 5. Commissioner Longinos Gonzalez Jr. was concerned that District 1, which is commercial in nature, will be


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the operations and construction district with financial leadership. He asked if residents would ever be able to get control of that district. Meggan Herington, executive director, Planning and Community Development, said it was her understanding that property owners within the district would be in control of it, i.e., whoever owns the commercial property unless some residential is built on the portion for which nothing is yet planned.

During the public comment part of the hearing, three people spoke against the application. No one spoke in support.

Joe Hall, a High Forest Ranch resident, said the bond issuance is not reasonable because the applicant is relying heavily on a refinance in 10 years at a lower interest rate when financial projections beyond 10 years are highly unreliable. With regard to interest rates which the applicant had said would be at 4% in 2035, he commented, "I don't know what it [the interest rate] is going to be but neither does the applicant. The amount of this debt issuance is more than \$400,000 per approved lot. It's nuts."

FHN resident Phil Shecter, who has spoken against the FHN revised sketch plan in the past, addressed the hearing at length using time donated by others. He said wording in the applicant's documentation allows property within five miles of the districts' boundaries to be brought in and taxed despite county staff and the applicant saying the districts will not affect other properties.

He questioned the justification for the service plan when there was no commitment from any hotel developer. Shecter also told the commissioners that neighbors to the 912 acres covered by the FHN sketch plan had received notification from the developer that it was proposing the sale of 50, 2.5-acre lots on well and septic. These would be within the metro districts' boundaries but would get no benefit from that in terms of water and wastewater services. He urged the commissioners to deny the application until a hotel contract and a preliminary plan are in place.

Rick Stauch, a Cathedral Pines resident, spoke in his capacity as vice president of the Board of Directors of the Cathedral Pines Metropolitan District and to represent the homeowners associations of Cathedral Pines and the surrounding communities and the FHN residents. He said resale of the planned FHN properties would be difficult due to the tax structure because prospective buyers would be faced with very high property taxes. He questioned the assumption that a branded hotel will come given the limited year-round leisure activities in the area.

He asked, "Does this proposal demonstrate that the proposed districts have or will have the financial ability to discharge the proposed indebtedness on a reasonable basis? We don't think so. I mean why would a homebuyer want to purchase a home in an area with some of the highest property taxes in the county when there are other desirable areas nearby that don't have same the tax burden?" Stating that there are several problems with the service plan as written, with many ambiguities, inconsistencies, and inaccuracies, he urged the commissioners to have the applicant rewrite the plan. He ended, "The future residents of FHN need and frankly deserve your protection. Please do not approve this proposal."

In rebuttal, Dykstra said the districts had no power to force property owners outside the boundaries to join them, but owners could petition to be allowed to join should they wish. Lori Seago, senior assistant county attorney, had earlier also clarified this, stating that it could not occur without the consent of the property owner. He said the presentation of the service plan was not premature as Shecter had suggested but

necessary as the developer needed to know finance was available for the needed infrastructure before going any further.

Gonzalez voiced his concerns about the service plan and the economic feasibility of the project, citing other developments with much less debt maximums that were providing a lot more housing. "When we see something at \$400 million of debt, it asks the question, you must ask the ques-

tion "is this viable?" He asked, "Is this project even viable if you're having to ask for something that is twice as much as any other district is utilizing?"

He continued, "Does it make sense to do so [approve \$400 million of debt for 900 homes] for what would be the richest neighborhood in entire El Paso County and have the most debt for a metro district? And why that concerns me secondarily is because we provide specific ownership tax to

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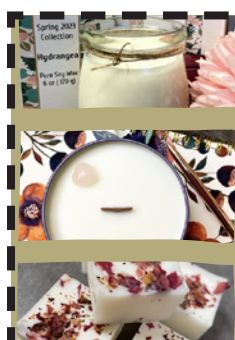
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these projects. So, we are subsidizing in part to these projects."

He said, "I still have great concerns about the fact that the way this district system is set up will not allow residents to have say in the way finances will happen. Now the applicant stated at some point the residents will take over but, as was stated before, by our planning director, District 1 has commercial and the fitness center but there was no stated specific plan for what would happen in that one corner of commercial. If it's not commercial, then the whole district and the finances for the entire metro district will be planned by the fitness center. I don't think that's going to be sold to a third party, that's going to be owned by the developer. The developer potentially will have control of this district forever and residents will never have a chance to have control of this metro district. That's the possibility that exists with this. I think that's unacceptable. We're supposed to be representing everybody including the applicant but also the residents and if we're not going to stand by residents having some kind of control, that doesn't make sense to me." "It doesn't make sense and residents will look at us, El Paso County residents will look at us, and we lose credibility I think if this gets approved this way."

Gonzalez then moved to deny but the motion failed as there was no second.

Commissioner Holly Williams said she appreciated the applicant's effort to reduce the amount of debt being asked for and the extra fees placed on some of the commercial parts to help pay down the debt. She also stated the homeowners would have the opportunity to serve on the board. She moved to approve and

was seconded by Commissioner Stan VanderWerf.

VanderWerf commented, "I really do appreciate the comments from Commissioner Gonzalez. Sometimes he is truly the conscience of some of the issues that we have before us. But we do have a severe, severe housing shortage and some people have a lot of money and can afford to do these kinds of things and other people don't and we have to be responsible I think for a wide variety of people that have different levels of wealth."

Gonzalez commented, "I think the application with all the inclusions is an insult to the public and to residents and all El Paso County." He moved three amendments to the motion, but the legal advice was that they were beyond the scope of the board's authority on the matter.

Gonzalez commented, "I absolutely believe we will lose credibility today based on what I'm about to see happen right now and people are going to respect this board less. I think I'm going to respect this board a lot less after what I am about to see."

The vote to approve was 3-1. Gonzalez was the no vote and Commissioner Carrie Geitner was excused.

Gonzalez said, "I'd like us to look at our code again because if we're going to approve this, we have no rationale to disapprove any in the future so we might as well give administrative control over metro districts to our director because I think she'll probably do a better job than what I just saw today."

Colorado Pumpkin Patch special use permit approved

At the Sept. 14 BOCC land use meeting, the commissioners approved a special use permit for an increase in parking numbers for the Colorado Pumpkin Patch at the Colorado Kids Ranch. The hearing lasted almost eight hours.

The application came to the BOCC from the Sept. 7 Planning Commission meeting with a recommendation for denial by a 5-3 vote. The Planning Commission had concerns about traffic, neighborhood safety, and the number of vehicles permitted on-site. There was also significant discussion about the conditions of approval and the timing of required road improvements.

The 40-acre Monument property is located off Highway 105 and is zoned RR-5 (residential rural). Since 2018, owner John (JD) Chapman has operated an agritainment business which is a permitted use under the zoning and limits cars to a maximum

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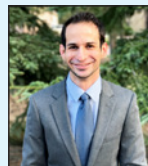
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of 50. The Pumpkin Patch operates for six weeks every year, beginning in late September. Chapman also holds a tulip festival over two weekends in May and runs summer youth camps. His nonprofit, the Johnny Pumpkinseed Program, allows families with foster or special needs children to enjoy the pumpkin patch for free.

As the pumpkin patch became more successful, the number of cars parking at the property exceeded the permitted 50. This generated complaints from neighbors which saw the county issue code violations and led to Chapman applying for a special use permit to increase the parking cap to 325. Although the property is adjacent to Highway 105, it does not have direct access to it and so visitors use Canterbury Drive and then the unpaved Saddlewood Road to reach the property.

The county has received a lot of correspondence about the traffic driving to and from the property, both in support and opposition. At the Planning Commission, neighbors raised concerns about traffic congestion, public safety, noise, dust, fire danger in a heavily wooded area with no hydrants, and littering.

Eleven citizens voiced these complaints again at the BOCC hearing. Neighbor Rikki Van Pelt said, "My kids personally were almost hit on our own property. We've had people drive through our backyard to try to find the pumpkin patch." Other neighbors testified to the volume and speed of traffic making it dangerous to walk or ride horses in the neighborhood when the Pumpkin Patch is in operation. One neighbor stated that the particulates in the dust could stay airborne for 10 days and questioned what carcinogens or other contaminants might be in it.

Eleven citizens spoke in support, commenting that the patch provided good family entertainment in a safe place, created community, and gave families the opportunity to reconnect with agriculture and farming. Many commented that Chapman provides valuable work opportunities for young people and commended his mentoring of young employees.

The commissioners heard that county staff had recommended several road improvements both on and off the property to be paid for by Chapman as part of the special use permit and to mitigate the neighbors' concerns. These include turn lanes on Highway 105 at Canterbury Drive, the paving of Saddlewood Road up to the property's entrance, asphalt chippings in the parking lot and driveway, and a privacy fence on the western boundary. The recommendation was that all be completed by September 2024.

Nina Ruiz of Vertex Consulting Services, representing the owner, said Chapman was willing to make all the required improvements but would need longer to be able to afford them. Chapman is proposing an alternative timeline which would see the improvements completed in stages up to the end of 2028. Craig Dossey, also with Vertex, mentioned the cost of the improvements again as he argued for the special permit stating, "Quite frankly, if he's [Chapman] asked to do \$1 million of improvements, he needs to have more income. That's business. That's just good business. He can't afford \$1 million of improvements both onsite and offsite and operate six weeks of the year."

Earlier in the year, Chapman applied for a deviation to allow direct access from Highway 105 which was denied as county plans to reduce the number of access points directly onto the highway as part of its Highway 105 Improvements Project. The proposed access would also have been too close to other access points, raising safety concerns. Both Ruiz and Dossey argued again for access direct from the highway during the events, stating this would also be the neighbors' preferred solution and would reduce Chapman's costs.

Addressing the commissioners, Dossey said, "Today's the day to help a small business continue to survive." He added, "Agricultural uses are going by the wayside. If we do not allow them to supplement their income, they will be gone."

The vote to approve was 4-0 with Gonzalez absent. The commissioners adopted the longer time limits proposed by Chapman with the intention that the longer timeframe be used to explore further the possibility of access from Highway 105. Moving for approval, Commissioner Carrie Geitner said, "I'll say for my part specifically, I'm not convinced that routing the traffic through the neighborhood is more safe than providing an additional access point [on Highway 105], and safety is a primary concern."

The Pumpkin Patch opened for the 2023 season two days after the hearing, on Sept. 16. See photo and caption on page 1.

Neighbor David Elson addressed the Sept. 23 Planning Commission meeting to thank the commissioners for their Sept. 7 decision on the application and to criticize that of the BOCC. He said, "Our neighborhood's residents feel betrayed by the commissioners who cast aside our land code's restrictions in favor of a specific interest and their own self-interest." He continued, "The agritainment concept is relatively new, being adopted by the code in 2017. It was written specifically to enable the Colorado Pumpkin Patch to relocate from its proximity to Matthew Dunston's Preserve at Walden housing development into our neighborhood, zoned residential." "Having donated a 23-

acre site for the construction of Monument Academy High School and after his donations of thousands of dollars to election campaign funds of current county commissioners, Matthew Dunston is the darling of

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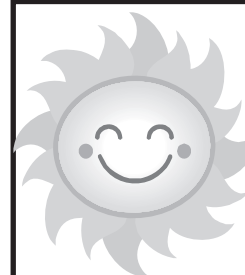
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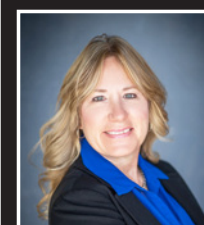
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the commissioners and the track record shows that what Matthew Dunston wants from the commissioners, he gets from the commissioners."

He spoke again at the Sept. 28 BOCC land use meeting to suggest that Dunston had in some way influenced the decision, stating, "Why does he so dearly want 325 vehicles on the Colorado Pumpkin Patch property? Well, you don't have to look any further than the fact that two years ago, he bought 40 acres 2,000 feet away from Colorado Pumpkin Patch on the east side of our Canterbury Estates neighborhood." Elson ran out of time before he could explain further and said he would send that information to the commissioners via email.

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

U.S. AIR FORCE ACADEMY (USAFA)

Proposed USAFA Cemetery Expansion

The U.S Air Force Academy (USAFA) announces the availability of a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the USAFA Cemetery Expansion. USAFA proposes to expand the existing USAFA cemetery that is located near the North Gate, along Parade Loop. The Proposed Action would involve two phases of cemetery expansion. During the first phase, the following would be constructed: two sections supporting 640 burial sites per section for a total of 1,280 burial plots, streets between and along the sections, parking, a combined restroom/pavilion building with a parking area, and up to two stormwater detention ponds (one detention pond would be installed in Phase 1). During the second phase, an additional two sections, also supporting 640 burial sites per section for a total of 1,280 burial plots with associated streets and infrastructure would be constructed to the east of phase one.

The Draft EA is available for review at the Penrose Library (located at 20 N Cascade Avenue Colorado Springs, CO 80903), Monument Library (located at 1706 Lake Woodmoor Drive Monument, CO 80132), Base Library (located at 5136 Redtail Drive USAFA, CO 80840), and via the USAFA website: <https://www.usafa.af.mil/Units/10th-Air-Base-Wing/Mission-Support-Group/Civil-Engineer-Squadron/Installation-Management/Environmental-Management/>. Comments on the Draft EA may be mailed to Barry Schatz, Environmental Element Chief, 8120 Edgerton Drive, USAFA, CO 80840; or emailed to 10CES.CENPP.Planning_Programming@us.af.mil no later than October 19, 2023.

USAFA will prepare and publish a Final EA following the 30-day comment period. The Final EA will summarize, and address comments received on the Draft EA. The USAF will only respond to public comments during specified, formal public comment and review periods.

Steppler Road rezone

Also at the Sept. 28 meeting, the commissioners voted to approve an application by Charlie Stewart to rezone his 36-acre property at 16850 Steppler Road, half a mile from the intersection of Settlers Ranch Road and Steppler Road, from RR-5 (residential rural) to RR 2.5 (residential rural).

The application was treated as a consent item, meaning there was no discussion. It came from the Sept. 7 Planning Commission meeting with a 6-1 vote recommending approval. Commissioner Brandy Merriam was the no vote due to concerns about losing land for livestock in the eastern part of the county.

The property currently consists of a single-family home and cattle/ranching infrastructure. The applicant's intention is to plat 2.5-acre residential lots in the future.

Tri-Lakes Cares update

The commissioners approved the submission of a Community Services Block Grant application at the Sept. 26 meeting. Haley Chapin, executive director, Tri-Lakes Cares, which receives part of its funding through the grant, spoke in the public comment portion of the meeting to thank them, telling the commissioners that requests for support have not gone back to pre-pandemic levels but continue to increase. At the same time, available funding has been reduced as COVID-associated funding has been taken away. She said increasing inflation is also affecting many.

Commissioner Holly Williams said, "The money has now been cut back to what would now be a post-COVID level, which is what we expected, but there's just a lot of struggles for many people in the community to feed their families."

Chapin said the mix of clients seeking assistance had diversified a little more on the income continuum, "We are seeing people who make more and are now in need. It's starting to creep into the middle-class space."

Other decisions

- Aug. 29—the commissioners approved the appointment of James Byers as a regular member of the Planning Commission. His term runs until Aug. 29, 2026.
- Aug. 29—approved a special warranty deed and a temporary construction easement associated with the Beacon Lite Road/County Line Road improvements project. They are associated with property owned by David K. Chin and come at a cost of \$19,000.

Helen Walklett can be reached at
helenwalklett@ocn.me.

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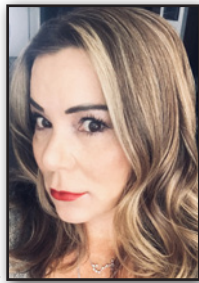
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El Paso County Planning Commission, Sept.7 and 21

Preliminary plan for 21-home subdivision recommended for approval

By Helen Walklett
At the Sept. 21 El Paso County Planning Commission meeting, the commissioners voted unanimously to recommend for approval an application for a preliminary plan for 20 single-family lots to be known as the Hay Creek Valley subdivision. The one residence currently on the property will remain, making a total of 21 lots.
The 214.62-acre property is zoned RR-5 (residential rural) and located west of Interstate 25, directly north of the United States Air Force Academy (USAF), south of the Forest Lakes subdivision, and southwest of the Town of Monument. Lots are planned to range in size from 5.5 to 17 acres. The USAFA has reviewed the plan and stated that an avigation easement (giving the right

of overflights in the airspace above or in the vicinity of the property) needs to be recorded with the final plat.
The property is currently gated and will continue to be once it is developed. Access is off Hay Creek Road. Jason Alwine, Matrix Design Group Inc. and representing the owner, said the county is requiring the developer to straighten the junction of the property's private road and Hay Creek Road to provide better line of sight.
The application was pulled from the consent calendar for a full hearing at the request of neighbors. One told the commissioners she had come to obtain more information, having only learned about the plans when the sign was posted the week before, and therefore did not know whether she was in

opposition. She raised concerns about the impact on wildlife, traffic, wild-fire evacuation, water availability, and county's communication with neighbors in the area about the application. She suggested a postponement of any decision to allow for those in the area to receive more information.
Alwine said they had worked extensively with Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on wildlife issues and any fencing would follow state guidelines. The county and the Fire Department had looked at the access and concluded there was no option for two-way in and out. There will be a fire suppression system meeting the Fire Department's requirements in the form of an underground 33,000-gallon tank. Water will

be addressed at the final plat stage.
Staff clarified that in 2022 when the application was submitted, only adjacent neighbors were notified. That changed this year to all property owners within 500 feet and this had been done in this application's case.
The application is now scheduled to be heard at the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) meeting on Oct. 12.
The Planning Commission also met on Sept. 7. The applications considered at that meeting went to the BOCC for consideration during September and are covered in the BOCC article on page 1.
Helen Walklett can be reached at helenwalklett@ocn.me.

MFD (Cont. from 1)

and about \$22 million in total revenue for 2024 (includes \$4.1 million for contractual services for the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD). The total projected revenue for Wescott in 2024 is expected to be about \$4.3 million.
• The TABOR fund requires 3% of the total revenue be retained by the district. The amount will increase with the property tax revenue increase.
• The district proposes lowering the mill levy to 18.4 after raising it last year to 18.83 to offset the loss of revenue from the temporary residential assessment rate drop. See www.ocn.me/v22n12.htm#mfd.
• If Referendum HH passes in November, staff will present a modified budget based on the new assessed property valuations.
Treasurer Tom Kelly asked what would happen if the ballot initiative 6A/6B for Gleneagle residents does not pass in November.

Kovacs said the budget would be adjusted and the property tax of 7 mills and 21.9 mills will remain for Gleneagle residents.
Apparatus and facilities costs
Kovacs gave examples of the rising costs of firefighting apparatus, and said:
• In 2004, the district purchased an engine for about \$230,000, in 2019 the district purchased an engine for \$727,000, in 2022 the district purchased two engines for \$841,000 each, and now a new engine costs about \$946,000.
• The cost of fire apparatus has accelerated over time, and building construction costs have recently increased to \$800-\$1,000 per square foot.

- The district is proposing to purchase a Type 6 Engine (brush truck), a replacement ambulance, and an F150 administrative truck, in 2024.
- The district hopes to begin the remodel of Station 4, purchase land for a future station, rebuild Station 3 at a location north of the YMCA off Jackson Creek Parkway (will include the district administrative offices), and invest in a regional public safety training center.

Impact fees

Kovacs said the impact fees collected from the district growth must be spent during the growth period, so to make sure they are distributed legally: \$500,000 will be used to purchase land for a future Station 6, \$500,000 will be contributed to the rebuild of Station 3, and \$500,000 will be used for the Training Center. The Impact Fee Fund will continue to increase in revenue until everything is built out, but the district cannot use the funding to purchase any capital expenditure outright, he said.

Budget priorities 2024

- Kovacs said the department priorities are:
- A competitive salary and benefits package including a wage increase of 3% as a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for all employees, the introduction of a 2% per pay period district matching optional 457 retirement savings plan, and an increase in the sick time benefit from 96 hours to 120 hours.
 - Training and educational opportunities for all employees, with the existing assistance program.
 - Hiring three entry-level firefighters and create a position for a fire inspector and an administrative training officer position.

- Investment in capital facilities. A recent survey indicated the firefighters rate the facilities as average and below.
- Investment in capital fleet and equipment.
- The continuation of funds set aside for future capital purchases.
- Agency accreditation in spring

- 2025.
- The 2022-26 Strategic Plan, a roadmap for the future of the fire district, includes community expectations and what the district is hoping to achieve. The plan was formulated from a combination of input from a community stakeholders meeting, input from the



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firefighters and the administrative staff, and the findings of the Master Plan conducted by Emergency Services Consulting International in 2019.

The second budget presentation will be in October and is subject to modifications, followed by a public hearing in November, said Kovacs.

Community paramedic proposal

Paramedic Carrie Fuller said she had been trying to implement a community paramedic pilot program over the past

several years. The program would cut down on 911 transports, keep patients safer by avoiding unnecessary emergency room visits, and save money over time. The Colorado Springs Fire Department and South Metro Fire Rescue already have robust programs, and the district calls are 80% fall assistance and 11% mental health.

The district would also introduce a Fall Reduction Program for the two nursing homes in the district where most of the fall assist calls are generated. Home risk assessments could be provided, and the district would mimic the Woodland Park Mental Health program. After the program is underway, additional educational programs could be added. The community paramedic program would not require additional personnel for 2024 and would be filled by the existing staff in dual roles, including an EMS department educator, and could include a contract with a mental health provider, she said.

Kovacs said the district needs to ensure the right resource is sent to each call and avoid sending a \$950,000 engine to assist with a fall or to a toxicology situation. The community paramedic program would relieve some of the burden on the health care system and avoid transporting patients who do not need to be occupying emergency room beds. The current setup is not an effective way of taking care of the problem and creates costly wear and tear on apparatus and high diesel fuel costs, he said.

Staff kudos

Kovacs congratulated Fuller for receiving a Bachelor of Arts and Science degree in Community Health. He also congratulated Battalion Chief of EMS Sean Pearson for representing the district with a presentation on mass casualty incidents at the University of Colorado health trauma conference at the Antlers Hotel.

Chief's report

Kovacs said the following:

- The district received \$3,730 from the Colorado Special Districts Safety Grant. The proceeds will be used to fund a portion of the district's snowplow.
- He thanked the Social Committee of High Forest Ranch Homeowners Association for donating \$1,092 to the district.
- Local 4319 unanimously voted to contribute \$10,000 for campaign materials for the Wescott ballot initiative. See photo with caption.
- The Annual Fill the Boot Campaign for the Muscular Dystrophy Association raised \$8,495.

Staffing update

Division Chief of Operations Jonathan Bradley said Lt. Keith Barker will be the



Above: A banner displayed at the corner of Gleneagle Drive and Baptist Road asks residents to vote yes on 6A and 6B in the upcoming November election. The Gleneagle Safety Committee paid for the signs displayed throughout the neighborhood with a unanimous pledge of \$10,000 from the Local 4319 branch of the International Firefighters Association. If both ballot questions pass, the residents will lower the mill levy for fire and EMS services and allow the merger between Donald Wescott Fire Protection District and Monument Fire District to be completed in 2024. The Joint Factual Summary for the Donald Wescott sub-district dissolution process explaining the ballot initiative can be found at www.monumentfire.org. *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*

first to occupy the rotational position of administrative training officer. The district recently lost Firefighter/Paramedic Taylor Neill to the Grand Junction Fire Department, an EMS/Paramedic requested training to become a firefighter, and a trainee recently dropped out of firefighter academy training. The district will have a total of six firefighters entering a Firefighter Training Academy in 2024.

Community Connect signup available

Kovacs said residents and businesses and property managers could create an account on Community Connect via the district website to provide valuable information that can help the Fire Department assist more effectively during an emergency. See www.monument-fire.org or visit www.communityconnect.io/info/co-monument.

October community events

Visit the local firefighters at Station 4, 15415 Gleneagle Drive on Saturday, Oct. 7 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Meet Monument Fire, check out the fire engines, and receive free food and goodies for the kids.

The Local 4319 Annual Pumpkin Giveaway event is scheduled to take place on Saturday, Oct. 14 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Monument Clocktower, Jackson Creek Parkway. Free pumpkins, live music, food trucks, and freebies for the kids are included.

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The event includes a canned food donation drop-off to help support Tri-Lakes Cares. See the calendar of events on page 26.

The meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday every month. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Oct. 25 at 6:30 p.m. at Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. For Zoom meeting instructions, agendas, minutes, and updates, visit www.monument-fire.org or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

Natalie Barszcz can be reached at nataliebarszcz@ocn.me.

Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District, Sept. 20

2022 audit is clean; 2024 budget direction explored

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD) meeting on Sept. 20, the board received the 2022 audit presentation, discussed the major 2024 budget priorities, and reviewed the board officer by-laws. The board also witnessed the swearing in of Capt. Michael Torres. A brief Pension Board of Trustees meeting preceded the meeting.

2022 audit presentation

Dawn Schilling, co-owner of Schilling and Co. Inc., Littleton, attending via Zoom, said the executive team had collaborated with her to complete the 2022 audit. She thanked the team and the district accountant for their assistance during the audit, and said:

- The district received an unmodified or clean opinion as of Dec. 31, 2022, and the financial position of the district “presents fairly.” The opinion could not be higher and there were no significant delays in providing information or disagreements with recording transactions.
- There was significantly more revenue than anticipated left in the budget at the end of 2022 due to deployments and special ownership taxes. The result left \$951 in the budget at the end of 2022, as close to a zero-based budget as possible.
- Investing in a local government investment such as ColoTrust could net the district 5.4% or about \$54,000 a year.
- There was a dip in assessed valuation of district properties in 2022, and the district attorney should be contacted to seek advice on Proposition HH. (Proposition HH is a question on the November ballot proposing a statewide bill that would implement property tax reductions and allow the state to retain and spend excess state revenue. For information on the fiscal impact of the measures visit <https://leg.colorado.gov/bluebook>.) The changes would be significant for special districts if it passes.

The board received the audit on Sept. 20, and she would file the audit with the state the following week, allowing some time for questions from the directors, and in time to make the Sept. 30 deadline.

The board unanimously approved the 2022 audit.

Auditor search resumes

Treasurer Jack Hinton thanked the staff and the accountant and said the auditor always does a good job and her fee is reasonable, but the district gets put on the back burner, requiring a two-month filing extension with the state every year, and she almost did not make the meeting. Even though the staff began providing financial information in February, her questions were not received until August. If the district were ever to file a late audit, the state could begin cutting funding. Most auditors are charging much higher fees, but the district should conduct another search and bid out for another auditor to conduct the 2023 audit, he said. See www.ocn.me/v23n3.htm#bffrpd.

Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn said a lot of questions were presented during evening hours.

2024 budget development explored

Fire Chief PJ Langmaid said the budget is usually submitted in October for board review, but because of Proposition HH and the increase in assessed property valuations, he requested the board consider:

- A proposed budget based on the assessed property valuations provided by the county with an assessed 15.24 mills levy to maintain the revenue trajectory.
- The board made a mill levy adjustment last year in line with the 2018 voter-approved ballot initiative, allowing a mill levy adjustment to compensate for revenue loss after the state dropped the assessment rates.
- If the board decides to stick with a 14.951 mill levy, there would be a budget shortfall of about \$101,000 for 2024. The

- board could dip into capital improvement funds to make up the difference. See www.ocn.me/v23n1.htm#bffrpd.
- The key initiatives for the 2024 budget are to pay down the debt on the engine and tender.
- A cost-of-living allowance increase of 4.7% based on the Front Range data from July/August 2023.
- Hire six new firefighters to begin using the ladder truck with limited capacity. Three more officer positions will be required with the opening of the ladder truck.
- The budget resolution will include the historical ballot language, approved by the voters in 2018, and be reviewed by legal counsel. See www.ocn.me/v22n10.htm#bffrpd.

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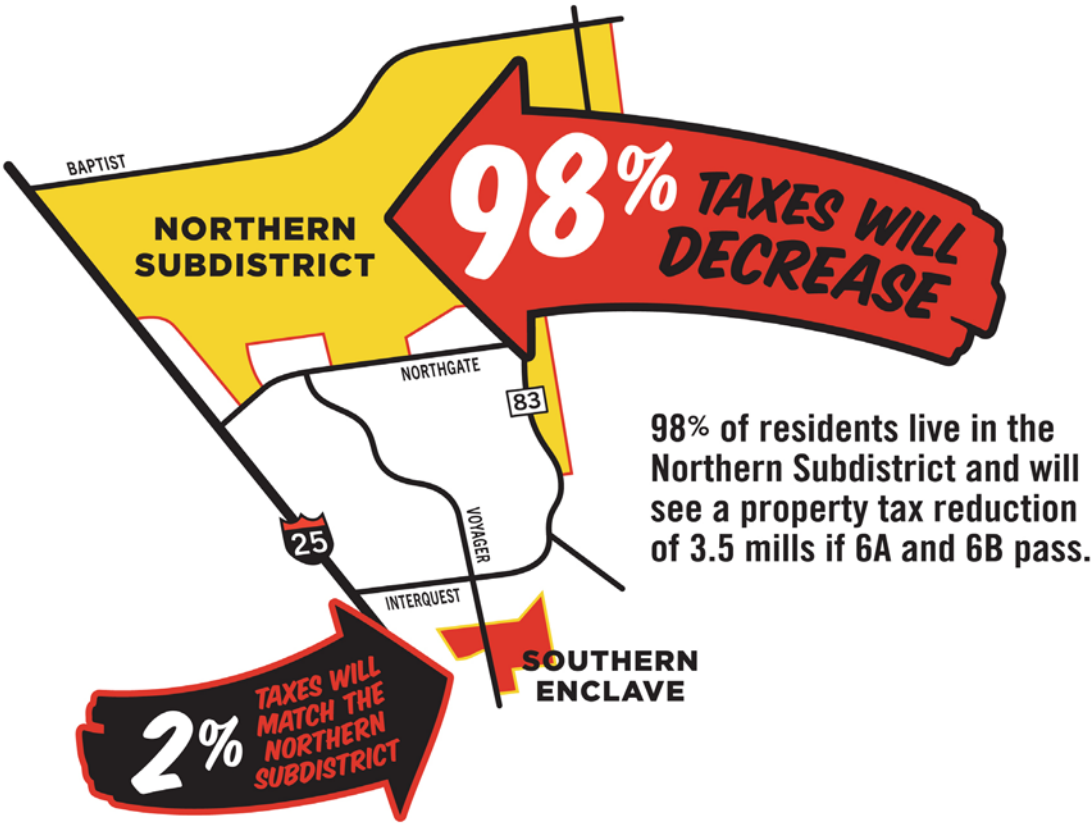
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If 6A and 6B pass, will I see a tax increase or decrease?



Who is the “Gleneagle Safety Committee”?

The Gleneagle Safety Committee is composed entirely of your neighbors and firefighters who currently or have previously worked out of the Gleneagle Firehouse. Many of us have spent decades protecting this community and care very deeply for the residents of Gleneagle, Pleasant View and surrounding communities. All of our funding has come out of our own pockets and donated by the firefighters.

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Hinton said through staffing attrition the district has enough salary funding to cover additional staff. The wildland deployments of Deputy Chief of Operations Chris Piepenberg and Dunn saved some salary expenditure. Another staff member was deployed for three months, he said.

Langmaid said if the board agrees, he would like to extend job offers to lateral firefighters the next day. There is a cost savings to hiring lateral entry firefighters due to the avoidance of a three-month fire academy delay, but it incurs an immediate job start and a higher starting salary. The Colorado Springs Fire Department (CSFD) has reduced its Fire Academy Training to summer only, so slots for the district will not be available. Lateral entry firefighters are usually difficult to attract due to the district’s lower wage scale, and staff lose out on accrued benefits when moving organizations, so moves are usually due to family decisions. The district usually receives about 50 applications, but just five were received in the last hiring round, he said.

Hinton suggested moving forward with the hiring, and the determining factor on adjusting the mill levy will depend on the passing of Proposition HH. The city has not yet excluded the remaining two-thirds (about 1,466) of the 2,200 properties subject to dual taxation, and the tax loss for 2025 is unknown, he said. See www.ocn.me/v22n2.htm#bffrpd.

- Langmaid also said:
- Because of the increase in property values, it is not possible to know how much revenue will be lost when the dual taxation residents are finally excluded, but it could be 10% to 20% of the budget.
 - The City of Colorado Springs will be under tremendous political pressure to complete the process that the board gave the city permission to begin in 2017, and once the tax assessments are finalized, those dual taxation residents will be pressuring the City Council to complete the exclusion process.
 - He recommended the board make the budget decision based on the ballot initiative that granted permission in 2018, and not on decisions made in Colorado Springs.
 - Proposition HH, a state decision, proposes to continue ratcheting down the property assessment rates.

If the board agrees with the recommendations, the executive staff will begin developing the budget for 2024, he said.

Vice Chair Kiersten Tarvainen said the district purchased a ladder truck and should be able to use it.

Hinton said he is in favor of paying off the debt on the apparatus purchases and the staffing increase.

Director Chad Behnken said he is on board with the general vision.

Director Jim Abendschan agreed with the issues, but more clarification is necessary on how the property taxes will be impacted if the board implements the 15.24 mill levy to make up for revenue loss, he said.

Langmaid said he encourages dialogue and direction from the board before continuing to develop the budget for the first presentation in October, but the budget can be changed at any time until December. The original request for an aerial mid-mount lad-

der truck was to support the growth in Sterling Ranch and the Flying Horse North developments, and the plan was to open up the truck in 2025-26 when additional property tax revenue would have covered the cost. There is no pressure to staff the truck, it is not the main priority, but the district is unlikely to obtain a SAFER grant to hire firefighters and he was not anticipating any success with a potential government shutdown, he said.

Apparatus replacement plan

Langmaid presented the board with the final budget projection for the two Ford F-550 Type 6 brush truck chassis, with one being a full new build for \$203,000. The funds will come from wildland deployment revenue. For information purposes, he also presented the cost of a Pierce Enforcer Engine for \$868,684. See www.ocn.me/v23n9.htm#bffrpd.

Directors’ bylaws

Dowden thanked recording board secretary Donna Arkowski for providing the board with the updated bylaws, and he requested the following changes:

- A change to reflect that the board may elect from its membership a secretary/assistant secretary, and/or assistant treasurer.
- There may be a permanent budget committee with another board officer involved in the budget process.
- There may be a permanent audit committee.

Arkowski said BFFRPD had not elected a board secretary for 45 years, but the option for both positions needs to remain in the bylaws until such time as the district does not have a recording secretary. The bylaws are not mandatory, just a suggestion by the district counsel, unless indicated that state law be followed as annotated in the bylaws, she said.

Hinton and Dowden questioned the board’s compliance when appropriations are made that exceed the approved budget during the year.

Langmaid said if the board passes an appropriation by resolution to make a purchase mid-year, they are not outside the bylaws, and that is why legal counsel is required to sign lease agreements. There is nothing to prohibit purchasing outright, and he recommended the board continue reading the bylaws and discuss appropriations with legal counsel, he said.

Arkowski said the bylaws set local government and state government apart, the board cannot spend more than they receive, and there are different rules for lease purchase agreements.

Dowden said he was inclined to agree with Langmaid, but clarification from district attorney Linda Glesne should be made to ensure the board remains in compliance.

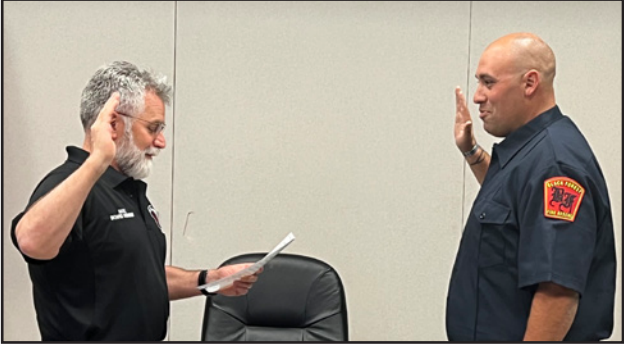
The board unanimously adopted the bylaws subject to the changes.

Wildland deployment update

Piepenburg said the department still had crews deployed in California, and the U.S. Forest Service had hoped to keep them until November. But due to the government furlough and weather activity, crews will all be back in the district by the end of September.

Director Chad Behnken asked if the frequency of the 2023 deployments were comparable to the 2022 numbers.

Piepenburg said the district is ahead of 2022, with five 21-day deployment rotations, 105 days with the Type 3 (wildland fire engine) and 35 days with the



Above: From left, Chair Nate Dowden administers the oath of office to the new Training Capt. Michael Torres at the beginning of the Sept. 20 Board of Directors meeting. Family members pinned on the badge and lapel pins during the ceremony. *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*

Type 6 (brush truck).
Langmaid said the surplus revenue for 2023 is expected to be about \$1 million, the same as for 2022.

August department reports

The August department report and the financial report can be found under Transparency at www.bffire.org.

Staff kudos

Tarvainen said she attended the Echelon Front Women’s Assembly with five colleagues from CSFD, and the women of BFFRPD in attendance were exceptional, and that is a testament to the leadership within the district.

Arkowski said former board member Bill Marchant praised the department for the professionalism demonstrated when his wife needed an ambulance during a life-threatening emergency.

Donation received

Dowden said the district received a note card from the High Forest Ranch community, thanking the department for keeping them safe. The card was accompanied with a donation of \$1,370 from Monica Davis of the Social Committee of the High Forest Ranch Homeowners Association. He thanked the group for the generous donation.

Former board director remembered

Arkowski said former board Director Peter Burleson had recently passed away. He served on the board in the 1980s-90s for about 10 years.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Pension Board of Trustees meeting

The BFFRPD Pension Board of Trustees held a short meeting to discuss the fund status, distributions, and expenses.

Pension Board Trustee John Strupp was excused. Trustee Lisa Montijo attended via Zoom.

The board approved the minutes from the Sept. 15, 2021 meeting, 6-0.

Hinton said the beginning balance for the Volunteer Pension Fund in 2023 was about \$1.336 million and the ending balance was \$1.383 million with a gain of \$4,500 in interest. The distributions to the volunteer pensioners were \$37,000. Expenses were \$4,000, and the fund gained about \$47,000, he said.

Arkowski said the financial statement accounted for the first six months of the year, and the actuarial report states that the pension fund is in good condition and a little overfunded. The report recommends the district continue to fund the pension annually, and the pension fund still has 27 members.

Montijo said it is important that the fund is in good shape, because she plans on living forever, and it is good that all the members are still around.

The board accepted the reports as presented, 6-0.

The next Pension Board meeting will be at the beginning of the regular board meeting in September 2024.

The Pension Board of Trustees meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

Meetings are usually held on the third Wednesday of the month at Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. Meetings are open to the public in person or via Zoom. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Oct. 18 at 7 p.m. For joining instructions, updates, agendas, minutes, and reports, visit www.bffire.org or contact Director of Public Relations Brooke Reid at admin@bffire.org or call 719-495-4300.

Natalie Barszcz can be reached at nataliebarszcz@ocn.me.

Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, Sept. 27 Board meeting canceled

By Natalie Barszcz

On Sept. 27 at 2:09 p.m., this reporter received notice that the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District Board of Directors had canceled the scheduled meeting due to the lack of a quorum. For the Joint Factual Summary for the Donald Wescott sub-district dissolution regarding ballot questions 6A and 6B, and information about the October public hearing for the 2024 budget presentation, visit www.monumentfire.org. For details on the proposed 2024 budget, information, and upcoming events see the Monument Fire District article on page 1 and the calendar on page 26.

Meetings are usually held every other month on the fourth Wednesday. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 15 at 4:30 p.m., at Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. For Zoom meeting instructions, agendas, minutes visit www.monumentfire.org or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

Natalie Barszcz can be reached at nataliebarszcz@ocn.me.

If 6A and 6B pass, how much money will I save?

To determine this we must first figure out the *assessed value* of your home. The El Paso County Assessors office determines how much a household owes in property taxes. Currently in El Paso County the assessment rate for a single family home is 7.15% of the market value. So what does this mean? For simple math purposes, let’s pretend your home is worth \$100,000.

Market Value X Assessment Rate = *Assessed Value*

100,000 X 7.15% = \$7,150

So... the assessed value on a \$100,000 home is \$7,150. You’re probably wondering now what a mill levy is and how does that effect the property taxes I pay? The mill levy is the "tax rate" that is applied to the *assessed value* of a property. One mill is equal to one dollar per \$1,000 dollars of *assessed value*. It consists of a local portion which is used to fund schools, libraries, roads, police, and FIRE.

Currently, the mill levy for the Wescott Fire Protection District is 21.9 Mills. **Remember, by voting YES on 6A and 6B the fire district will LOWER this tax rate for you.** Again using our home valued at \$100,000, with an assessment rate of \$7,150.

Assessed Value X Mill Levy = Annual Taxes Received

\$7,150 X .0219mill = \$ 156.59 for fire protection for the year

Now we realize that homes in our area are worth much more than \$100,000, but now it’s easy to work the numbers out. A couple of quick examples:

Your Homes Market Value	Cost for Fire Protection Annually (What you pay now)	Estimated Tax in 2024 if 6A and 6B Pass (Mill Levy 21.4)	Estimated Tax in 2025 if 6A and 6B Pass (Mill Levy 18.4)
\$100,000	\$157	\$153	\$131
\$200,000	\$314	\$306	\$262
\$400,000	\$628	\$612	\$524
\$600,000	\$942	\$918	\$786
\$800,000	\$1256	\$1224	\$1048

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Town of Monument, Aug. 29

Gleneagle residents voice concerns about potential annexation



Above: Above: From left, Monument Police Chief Patrick Regan, Town Manager Mike Foreman, Mayor Mitch LaKind, Fire Chief Andy Kovacs and Assistant Public Works Director Jeremiah Reichert present information and answer questions to a crowd of Gleneagle residents on Aug. 29 at the Family of Christ Lutheran Church on Baptist Road, Monument. *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*

By Natalie Barszcz
Town of Monument (TOM) officials held a town hall meeting with residents of adjacent Gleneagle on Aug. 29 to gauge their interest in being annexed into the town.

The public was invited to participate in a question-and-answer session and was encouraged to attend online because of limited space at the Family of Christ Lutheran Church.

The Gleneagle residents in attendance were largely opposed to an annexation.

The church was at about half capacity with 100 residents attending in person after some heard about the meeting via social media sites and some via a local news media station just an hour before. The meeting was also announced on the TOM website a few days prior. This reporter received notification via Monument Fire District (MFD).

Town Manager Mike Foreman addressed the audience, saying the meeting was purely to garner the thoughts from the Gleneagle residents regarding a potential annexation into the TOM. Moving forward the decision would be entirely upon the will of the residents, at their request with voter approval, he said. Gleneagle had a population of 6,649 in 2020.

Mayor Mitch LaKind said he appreciated the turnout and would love to hear the residents' thoughts. During the July Fourth Street Fair, several residents approached him saying, "We can't wait to annex into the town," he said. He wished he had taken the names of the residents, but the subject of annexation had not been discussed with the Monument Town Council, only with Foreman. The town does have a state-mandated 3-mile potential annexation plan but cannot implement any plan until the residents agree, he said.

Fire Chief Andy Kovacs explained the merger process between MFD and Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) and said a consolidation discussion between the fire districts had been coming together over the last two years. He also said that before the merger began, DWFPD had a contract with American Medical Rescue ambulance, but 80% of the time it was responding

to calls in Colorado Springs and not in Gleneagle. The combined district now has Advance Life Support ambulances at Station 4 and 5 and another at Station 1 on Highway 105, reducing response times to service Gleneagle.

DWFPD will have a ballot measure in November seeking to equalize the two-mill levy the Gleneagle residents are being assessed, and at the completion of the merger next year the residents will receive a reduction from 21.9 mills to 18.4 mills. Residents can read what has been going on over the past two years by examining the MFD Feasibility Study, the 2021-22 annual reports, and the Joint Factual Summary at www.monumentfire.org. MFD is a special district and not affiliated with the TOM, he said.

Note: Most of the DWFPD and MFD boards of directors attended the meeting. See <https://www.ocn.me/v23n8.htm#dwfpd> and www.ocn.me/v23n9.htm#mfd.

Monument Police Chief Patrick Regan said when the idea was brought to his attention, he was asked about the benefits to providing service to Gleneagle. Monument Police Department (MPD) has a budget for 27 officers and is one of only a few fully staffed departments, with a retired military corporal providing training. A dedicated tax revenue supports the Police Department, and in the future the headquarters may move away from the Town Hall to a central location, closer to Gleneagle.

The biggest benefit to Gleneagle residents would be an increased patrol presence, including drive throughs, responding to requests for investigation, and code enforcement issues. MPD has already been assisting in Gleneagle, providing backup for the El Paso County Sheriff's Office. The department would assist either way, but annexation would require hiring about 15 officers, costing about \$2 million (including equipment) in the first year and would not be lucrative, he said.


Foreman said policing is provided from the general fund, about \$2.6 million from property taxes and sales taxes, and a dedicated 0.5 cent sales tax is collected throughout Monument, generating about \$1.7 million for MPD.

Assistant Public Works Director Jeremiah Reichert said the Public


Works Department had no interest in promoting annexation and it was a trickle-down decision. Public works departments across the nation are operating underneath what they receive, and adding more infrastructure would not be lucrative. He talked about the lifespan of roads, typically 25-30 years, for sewer, sanitary and storm structures, about 40-50 years, and water main infrastructure lasts about 75-100 years. For maintenance and replace-

ment costs, there is always a greater need than funds provide.

Annexation would not be a "cash cow for the Public Works Department with every dollar coming in trickling down to just a dime." The TOM has about 29 miles of roadway responsibility, and Gleneagle has 18 miles, and about \$25 million likely would be needed for the additional infrastructure and some additional maintenance staff, he said.



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Here are some of the questions and comments:

- “We don’t need annexation, it’s more bureaucracy in the safest part of the county.”
- “Is the fire department dependent on annexation?”
- “The boundaries of the annexation need to be clarified?”
- “The new Property Tax Assessment numbers are not beneficial in swaying a decision.”
- “What the TOM has done with their downtown area, allowing developers to infest the town like locusts is not inspiring, and the annexation appears to be greed driven by the new assessments, it looks like a disingenuous money grab, and more honesty is needed.”
- “We do not want any other water, sewer district, or electric company, and with only one school, Gleneagle has a great thing going, we don’t need annexation.”
- “How would it affect Antelope Trails Elementary School, school districting and D20?”
- “It was disappointing to find out about the meeting from Nextdoor.com on Aug. 25, prompting a canvass of the neighborhood to get the word out.”
- “I found out about the meeting about 90 minutes beforehand, and the presentations look time consuming, just how long had the town been planning the meeting?”

- “The communication is abysmal, I heard about it on the 5 p.m. news on Channel 5.
- “Pleasant View Estates residents were not notified; we are not part of Gleneagle.”
- “Are the Monument residents satisfied with the performance of the Public Works Department?”
- “Growth looks out of control and over expanded, and why did Donala Water and Sanitation District (DWSD) help Monument out with water about five years ago?”
- “This looks like a water grab, and Gleneagle has the best water in the area, with a separate aquifer from Denver and its own wells.”

Several residents said they were confused about why the meeting was organized, and the majority expressed their appreciation for the fire and police departments.

In response, LaKind said he had not been involved with organizing the meeting and there had been zero discussion at the Monument Town Council meetings. He said it was no skin off his back whether annexation is pursued or not, the town would have less work, no additional requirements, and no legal fees. Monument is not making money out of annexation, and there are other Town Council members to ask and meeting minutes to confirm. He wished the residents that approached him at the Street Fair had attended the meeting. Monument has no control over Colorado Springs

annexing Gleneagle and the residents can choose to do nothing or go with Colorado Springs, he said.

Kovacs said MFD is already serving the Gleneagle district and east to Highway 83 (Station 5), and annexation would not change the level of service. However, if Gleneagle residents were to decide to annex into Colorado Springs, MFD would have to negotiate the sale of Stations 4 and 5, retain the apparatus and have 24 firefighters to either absorb some into the remaining stations or lay them off. The greatest loss would be losing the firefighters, he said.

Foreman said he had organized the meeting, in an effort to hear from the residents, and based on the feedback received, it is to do nothing, and he said in response:

- The meeting was announced on the town website and via multiple social media sites last week.
- Gleneagle residents would be eligible to run for office in Monument, vote for ballot measures, and make decisions.
- If annexation were to go ahead, residents would pay 7.63% sales tax and the extra 1 cent that Gleneagle and some Monument residents pay to support the voter-approved Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority for road maintenance, capital projects and transportation needs.
- Monument property taxes are assessed 5.75 mills.
- The annexation bound-

aries to the east had not been worked out before the meeting but would likely extend to Roller Coaster Road.

- Gleneagle’s neighbors to the north reside in Triview Metropolitan District (TMD), a separate special district with different taxation, managing its own wells, roads, and infrastructure, to include the construction of the Northern Delivery System pipeline project.

LaKind said the overlay of the school districts would not change, and that the TOM only has one school within the town; the rest are located in unincorporated El Paso County. DWSD would still provide the water and sanitation to the residents. The property tax bills from the El Paso County treasurer break down how much is paid into the districts by each resident. The school districts are self-governing and there would be no change there, he said.

Note: None of the water districts in northern El Paso County has its own exclusive aquifer. They do operate their own wells within their districts, typically extracting groundwater from the Denver and Arapahoe aquifers. Districts have existing interconnects should emergencies occur, and any water exchanged between districts would be purchased or replenished. See www.ocn.me/v16n9.htm#tmd. DWSD supplied TMD in late June/early July 2016 after a 5-foot break occurred. DWSD was reimbursed \$151,943 for providing the water. See www.triviewmetrodistrict.com.

Residents of Monument receive electricity service from Mountain View Electric Association.

Resident Jones said the Gleneagle community was not fully represented at the meeting, and it is not fair to shut it down or go forward because most of the residents did not receive any information or notification. As strong as the meeting is against annexation, there has to be more representation from the neighborhood and more communication, she said.

Foreman said the meeting was preliminary and the boundaries for annexation were not defined before the meeting and that would require working with the county. If the residents want to reach out to the TOM staff, that would be the next step. Any annexation would require 51% voter approval and requires resident initiation. He apologized for the missteps in communication and thanked the residents for attending the meeting.

In conclusion, the last resident to speak requested a show of hands for or against annexation. The majority of residents stood in opposition to any annexation and the meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Note: On Aug. 30, a letter of apology from the town manager to the residents of Gleneagle was posted at www.townofmonument.org. Natalie Barszcz can be reached at nataliebarszcz@ocn.me.

Monument Town Council, Sept. 5 and 18

Unanimous vote hopes to put ethics allegations to rest

By Chris Jeub

The Monument Town Council met twice in September to swear in and promote new officers and staff, pass ordinances to clean up the town’s permitting code, and grant the local ice cream shop a liquor license to expand its services. The council also broke into executive session, of which the mayor abstained, to prepare a response for two remaining ethics charges from an independent investigation into a previous council meeting. The resolution, which passed unanimously, was expressed with hope that this would end “frivolous allegations.”

Promotions

On Sept. 5, Police Chief Patrick Regan administered the oaths of office to three new police officers: Pablo Barrientos, Morgan Chapman, and William Rios, underscoring their commitment to serving the town. A noteworthy promotion took place as Deputy Town Clerk-

Tina Erickson was elevated to the position of town clerk. Mayor Mitch LaKind remarked that it was “long overdue.” Erickson reflected on her journey, stating, “I started in 2017 working as a front desk admin, and now here we are.” Erickson had successfully passed the Colorado Municipal Clerks Association examination, solidifying her qualifications for this pivotal role within the community’s administration.

All ordinances pass unanimously

The council passed four ordinances unanimously.

- Ordinance No. 18-2023: The council addressed an inconsistency in the Monument Municipal Code related to the approval process for final plats. Town Planner Jeff Liljegren explained, “Current code contradicts itself in approval of final plats, creating confusion.” The change man-

dates public hearings before the Planning Commission and Town Council for Final Plat applications. Councilmember Marco Fiorito led a short discussion about updating language in the code to reflect “Town Council” instead of “Board of Trustees” in line with the Home Rule Charter, a change anticipated following the 2022 election.

- Ordinance No. 19-2023: Liljegren presented this ordinance which focused on amending a section of the Municipal Code related to signs and awnings. The Planning Commission voted unanimously to approve the revision, simplifying the code and ensuring its coherence. This change was deemed necessary as it, in the words of Erickson, “removed chapters that are confusing.”
- Ordinance No. 20-2023:

Town Attorney Bob Cole presented an ordinance that approved a real property exchange with Porchlight Properties LLC. This exchange was designed to benefit the town’s water supply system by securing property where a new well sits. Councilmember Steve King inquired about potential implications for the Santa Fe Trail and right-of-way for expanding Beacon Lite Road. Town Manager Mike Foreman clarified that adequate right-of-way would be available for road widening as the area develops.

- Ordinance No. 21-2023: In a presentation by Foreman, the council authorized the acquisition of real property described as Lot 2, Block 1, Buttonwood Park Subdivision No. 2, located near the current Town Hall. For several years, the town

had been trying to purchase these lots for the benefit of the community. King, seeking clarification, asked if this ordinance committed the town to the purchase, and Foreman emphasized that negotiations and further studies would be conducted in future executive sessions.

Executive session addressed ethics complaint

The council convened an executive session on Sept. 18. This session delved into two critical topics: 1. regarding personnel matters involving the town manager and 2. regarding the partial dismissal and ethics complaint from the Independent Ethics Commission. Attorney Cole presided and Mayor LaKind abstained.

The complaint encompassed several issues related to town staff, with most of the complaints being dismissed by the state commission. However, two allegations moved forward. First, it was alleged that Mayor LaKind advised the council on a matter in which he had a personal interest. Secondly, there were concerns about the mayor’s possible conflict of interest during the April 11 meeting of the Town Council. During this meeting, the council had approved payment of Mayor LaKind’s legal invoice for work that had been deemed beneficial to the town.

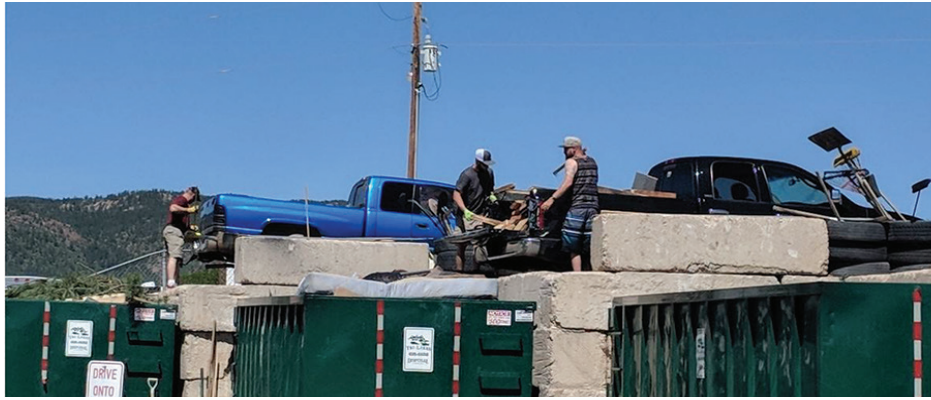
Cole expressed his opinion that these complaints appeared to be an attempt to “harass and embarrass” the new Town Council. He further explained that when faced with tort claims, the town has a responsibility to defend its personnel. The resolution passed during the session directing the town attorney and staff to provide a response to the complaints, emphasizing the alignment of interests between the mayor and the town.

Councilmember Ken Kimple inquired about the deadline for the response, to which



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- Tires
- Televisions

Cole responded, “By September 21.” Kimple termed the situation “a shame” and suggested that “some folks just can’t let go.” Fiorito expressed concerns about the use of taxpayer funds to defend against what he perceived as frivolous complaints, stating, “This resolution sets the tone for future participants that ‘we will defend you to the very end,’ especially against innuendo that has no merit.” Councilmember Jim Romanello, who ran against LaKind during the election, stated, “There was absolutely no influence or coercion, and there was nothing improper at all with the April 11 meeting.”

Councilmember Laura Kronick expressed the hope that this resolution would bring an end to the matter, likening it to “cutting the head from the snake.” Councilmember King emphasized the council’s unanimous approval, with advice from the town lawyer, regarding what constituted personal expenses and what benefitted the town. He stressed that the core issue revolved around whether they were coerced in their decision-making, which he saw as an attack on their integrity.

The resolution was passed with unanimous support from the council, 6-0.

2024 budget and new liquor license
The council engaged in a detailed discussion regarding the 2024 budget. Director of Finance Mona Hirjoi highlighted significant increases in workers’ compensation and property and casualty expenses, with both rising by 75% and 49%, respectively, from 2023 to 2024. The primary reason cited for these increases is the growth in employment. However, the council was reassured that the general fund balance would be easily funded, with no need to tap into reserves. Mayor LaKind inquired about the delayed hiring of a tax collector position, which was approved nine months ago, expressing concern about the timeline. Hirjoi explained the complexities of the hiring process, taking about two years, but LaKind emphasized the need to fulfill promises made to voters under Home Rule.
The meeting also included a public hearing regarding a new lodging and entertainment liquor license application for Lolley’s Ice Cream at 174 Washington St. The application was filed in August and was found to be in compliance with Monument’s ordinances. Owners Shelley and Dustin Sapp were present to answer questions, and Mayor LaKind praised the renovation efforts of the ice cream shop. Councilmember Kimple inquired about the type of liquor and

raised questions about parking and capacity, which were satisfactorily addressed by Shelley Sapp. Terri Hayes, president and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce, testified in support of the application, emphasizing the Sapp family’s dedication to renovating the corner lot where Lolley’s Ice Cream sits. The application was approved unanimously, 7-0.

The Monument Council 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 two regular meetings are scheduled for Monday, Oct. 2 and Monday, Oct. 16. Call 719-884-8014 or see www.townofmonument.org for information. To see upcoming agendas and complete board packets or to download audio recordings of past meetings, see <http://monumenttownco.minutesondemand.com> and click on Town Council.
Chris Jeub can be reached at chrisjeub@ocn.me.

Note: The Monument Planning Commission did not meet in September.

Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, Sept. 14 and 28

Elephant Rock property lease with option to purchase approved

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans
In September, the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees voted on a resolution authorizing a lease for a portion of the Eagle Rock property and on a resolution regulating recreational vehicle (RV) use and storage on private property. An ordinance governing signs was discussed and tabled. Palmer Lake Police Officer Eugene Ramirez was awarded Palmer Lake’s Life Saving Medal. The board granted five special event permits and appointed members to the Parks Commission and to the Community Development Advisory Board (CDAB). The board addressed several land use issues and hired a new accounting service.

The board held two executive sessions: one following the regular meeting on Sept. 14 and one preceding the regular meeting on Sept. 28.

Elephant Rock property lease

At its Sept. 28 meeting, the board considered Resolution 55-2023, which authorizes Mayor Glant Havenar to sign a lease agreement with EcoSpa LLC, owned by Richard and Lindsay Willan, for 2.8 acres of the town’s Elephant Rock property. The lease includes an option for the Willans to purchase the land and an acknowledgement that the Planned Unit Development for the property will need to be amended, with any amendments to be reviewed and approved by the board at a future meeting.

Attorney Matt Krob pointed out that if the town terminated the lease, the option to purchase the land would also be terminated. He explained that any request by the Willans or by future owners to change the use of the land would need to be reviewed by the Planning Commission and voted on by the board following public hearings, so the town would retain some control over the future of the property even after it was sold. The town could also use a deed restriction to prevent certain future uses, he said.

The board voted unanimously in favor of the resolution leasing the property to the Willans with an option to purchase.

RV use and storage on private property

At a workshop on Sep. 14, the board returned to its discussion of how RV use and storage should be regulated, focusing on RV use and storage on private property. At a previous meeting in August, the board passed an ordinance prohibiting RV use and storage on public property.

Havenar opened the discussion by explaining that RV use and storage had been mistakenly omitted from an update of the town’s municipal code. She said she had concerns about regulating residents’ use of their property.

Trustee Kevin Dreher said he had no issues with storing RVs on private property, but he favored limits and didn’t want people living in them on a permanent basis. He suggested using building permits to authorize residency in an RV only on empty lots when a house was being built on the property.

Trustee Jessica Farr said she did not want RVs connected to water and sewer systems. She suggested a one-year limit on RV occupancy.

Krob raised the issue of unimproved rights of way to the lot where any RV would be located and pointed out that if the town allowed use of an unimproved right of way by an RV, there would be a risk of liability for the town. Krob also said any ordinance regulating RV use and storage should include language prohibiting RVs to be used as accessory dwelling units.

Fire Chief John Vincent pointed out that there would need to be adequate access for emergency vehicles to any private property on which an occupied RV was present.

Resident Matt Stephen argued that, if no time limit on residency in an RV was set, it would be impossible to eliminate their use as a long-term residence.

Krob said he had enough direction from the board to draft an ordinance for consideration at the next board meeting.

At the Sept. 28 meeting, the board reviewed the ordinance Krob drafted using the input from the work session. The issue of RV owners using unimproved rights of way to reach the property where they would store their RV proved to be a sticking point. Dreher asked if waivers could be used to resolve the issue of liability. Krob said waivers might reduce but would not eliminate liability for the town and suggested that the town ask the question of Colorado Intergovernmental Risk Sharing Agency, the town’s insurer.

Trustees Shana Ball, Dreher, Nick Ehrhardt, Sa-

mantha Padgett and Dennis Stern, along with Havenar, voted to table the ordinance, with Trustee Jessica Farr voting not to table.

Sign code ordinance discussed, tabled

At its Sept. 14 meeting, the board made another attempt to craft an ordinance regulating signs. Havenar said she had heard from businesses who felt that the ordinance in its current form was not business friendly. The draft under discussion, for example, specifies that neon can be used only for signs indicating the business is open, but O’Malley’s Steak Pub has had neon signs advertising brands of beer for several years. Krob said some signs could be considered historic signs and grandfathered in, but if they were ever changed or destroyed the new sign would need to be reviewed. He stressed that historic signs had to have been legally compliant at some point. Krob recommended a workshop on the sign ordinance.

The board voted to table further discussion of the ordinance until October.

Officer Ramirez honored

Chief of Police Jason Vanderpool presented officer Eugene Ramirez with the Palmer Lake Life Saving Medal for his response to an attempted suicide earlier in the year. Ramirez and Monument Police Department Officer Dakota Degenhart responded to a report that an autistic individual was preparing to hang himself on Mount Herman. Ramirez and Degenhart located the individual and Ramirez supported him while Degenhart cut the rope from which he was already hanging. Together they administered first aid and got the victim down the trail to help. Without their actions, Vanderpool said, the attempt would have succeeded.

Special event permits granted

The board approved special event permits for five events:

- The Monument Academy Cross Country race to be held on Sept. 28.
- The Funky Little Theater production of the Legend of Sleepy Hollow, scheduled for a 7 p.m.

show on Friday, Oct. 13 and a 1 p.m. show on Saturday, Oct. 14 at the Palmer Lake Town Hall.

- The YMCA Creepy Crawl 5K Fun Run, to start at 9:30 a.m. on Oct. 28 at the Palmer Lake Regional Recreation Area. A separate run for kids will start at 10:30 a.m. The course will circle the lake and continue on the Santa Fe Trail. Race ceremonies will start at 8:45 a.m.
- The Rat Rods and Rust Car and Bike Show, to be held from 2 to 6 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 28 at the Palmer Lake Regional Recreation Area. Jeremiah King, the event’s organizer, described rat rods as gigantic rolling pieces of art. The event will include a costume contest for kids and trunk treats.
- Palmer Lake Outdoor Classic hockey tournament, to be held Jan. 5, 6 and 7 at the Palmer Lake Regional Recreation Area. Four high school teams will play on Saturday, Jan. 6 from 6-9 p.m. Adult hockey games will be held on Sunday, Jan. 7 from 9 a.m. until noon with a playoff game from 6-7:30 p.m. Fireworks are being considered for Saturday evening. The event is a fundraiser for Lewis-Palmer School District hockey and the nonprofit that organizes the event.

Appointments

At the Sept. 14 meeting, the board voted unanimously to appoint Garcia Wood to an alternate seat on the Parks Commission.

At the Sept. 28 meeting, the board voted unanimously to appoint Padgett to represent the town on the Community Development Advisory Board, which advises the El Paso Board of County Commissioners concerning community development and use of Community Development Block Grant funds. The board also voted to support the applications of Ball and Farr to serve on the Wildfire Resiliency Code Board.

PALMER LAKE (Cont. on 15)

But the ballot says a tax increase? Why is this so complicated? What is 6A and 6B?

To understand this we need to take a quick history lesson. Wescott Fire Protection District was officially formed in 1982. El Paso county looked quite different at that time. The City of Colorado Spring was a third the size it is today and practically ended at Fillmore Street. Wescott Fire District was formed to provide fire protection to the rural and un-incorporated areas of northern El Paso County. In fact, the first fire station was located at what is now Woodmen Rd. and I-25.

Over the last 40 years Colorado Springs has grown substantially and annexed areas of El Paso County into the city. When this happened the city assumed all tax income and became responsible to provide all the services we depend on, including fire protection. As the city built fire stations to protect the growing community, Wescott Fire was closing fire stations. As the city expanded North there was a very small section in the area of Voyager Pkwy and Old Ranch Rd. of approximately 49 homes that the city did not annex. The city continued moving north and this small section became an island surrounded by Colorado Springs. Wescott Fire is still responsible to provide fire protection to this area. However, the closest Wescott Fire station is now 9 miles away and response times can be in excess of 15-20 minutes.

After some discussion, the City of Colorado Springs agreed to provide medical and fire protection to the area. But... until the city of Colorado Springs annexes this small island these homeowners continue to pay taxes based on the county assessors un-incorporated El Paso county assessment rate. In 2017, in an effort to do the right thing a proposal was made by the Wescott Board of Directors to keep this area’s Mill Levy as low as possible. So this small island currently pays 7 Mills while the rest of the district (Gleneagle, Pleasant View, 83 Corridor etc.) pay 21.9.

Last year (2022) Tri-Lakes and Wescott fire districts merged to create Monument Fire. The reason for this merger is to provide faster response times with more personnel and dedicate 3 ambulances to this growing community. By combining resources, the fire districts can now provide a better service to the community at a lower tax rate. However, this merger is not finalized yet. To do this the fire districts must equalize the Mill Levies.

What That Means: The 49 homes in the island at Voyager and Old Ranch Road will see a tax increase to equalize the other, roughly 3000 homes in the fire district. This will simultaneously drop the other 98% of the fire district’s resident’s tax rate by one half a mill. The new fire administration intends to lower the mill levy an additional 3 points in the following year, bringing the new tax levy down from 21.9 to 18.4 across the newly created Monument Fire Protection District. It is for these 49 homes that the ballot issue must read as a “Tax Increase” under Colorado State law. Additionally, the fire district continues to work with the city of Colorado Springs and the 49 properties in the southern enclave (island) in an effort to clean things up and have this area annexed into the city.

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PALMER LAKE (Cont. from 13)

Land use issues

At the Sept. 14 meeting, the board voted unanimously in favor of Ordinance 20-2023, which disconnects a parcel of land belonging to Jim and Laura Fitzgerald from the town of Palmer Lake. The disconnection was the final step in a process begun in August to resolve tax issues created when the Fitzgeralds and Jim and Pam Parco exchanged land in 2014, intending to improve access to their respective properties. The land swap resulted in the Fitzgeralds and the Parcos receiving tax bills from both the town of Palmer Lake and from El Paso County. The annexation and rezoning voted on in August along with the disconnection will result in the Fitzgeralds and Parcos each receiving just one tax bill.

At the Sept. 28 meeting, the board held a public hearing on an application by Annette Ruiz for a conditional use permit allowing the Ruiz family to build a home on a lot on Vale Street that is currently zoned C1, for commercial use. There were no comments from the public and the hearing was closed. The board voted unanimously in favor of Resolution 68-2023, which gives the Ruiz family permission to build their home.

A second public hearing was held on Sept. 28 to consider a revised application to vacate the town's right of way on El Moro Avenue by Cindy Powell and Marilyn Redwine. Collins explained that the board had heard this request before, but some of the details

of the previous request were not in order and the new owner of an adjacent property wanted to be involved in the process. There were no comments from the public, and the board voted unanimously in favor of Ordinance 21-2023, vacating the right of way.

The board also voted to approve Resolution 67-2023, which authorizes Havenar to sign a professional service agreement with the Community Matters Institute to rewrite the town's land use code. Collins explained that the state Department of Local Affairs has provided \$25,000 to help pay for the rewrite, with the town also contributing \$25,000. Only Farr voted against the resolution.

New accounting service

The board voted in favor of Resolution 66-2023, which authorizes Havenar to sign a professional services agreement with Kelly Books LLC to provide accounting services to the town. Collins explained the agreement is a monthly contract and the role of Kelly Books will change once the town hires an accounting clerk.

Executive sessions

The executive session following the Sept. 14 meeting was convened to discuss the lease for the Elephant Rock property, the release of confidential discussion in executive sessions and the town administrator's evaluation and contract review. No action was taken following the executive session.

On Sept. 28, the executive session preceded the regular meeting, also to address the Elephant Rock property lease and the town administrator's evaluation. The same executive session was reconvened

following the regular meeting. When the second part of the executive session adjourned, the board tabled consideration of the town administrator's contract.

The next board meetings are scheduled for Oct. 12 and 26. See the town's website at www.townofpalmerlake.com to confirm times and dates of board meetings and workshops. Meetings are typically held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month at the Town Hall. Information: 719-481-2953.

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

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

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D38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee, Sept. 12
Committee sets priorities for coming year, appoints new co-chair

By Harriet Halbig

The D38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee (formerly the District Accountability Advisory Committee) set priorities for the upcoming school year at its Sept. 12 meeting.

Assistant Superintendent Amber Whetstine reported that the district was once again accredited with distinction for the previous school year. She said Lewis-Palmer High School and Palmer Ridge High School were downgraded from a performance plan to an improvement plan due to insufficient participation in the PSAT and SAT tests last spring. The state of Colorado offers parents the opportunity to request that students opt out of the testing, but the federal standard requires 95% participation. Monument Academy was also downgraded for the same reason.

Superintendent KC Somers commented that Colorado is one of 10 to 15 states with mandatory testing. He encouraged high school Building Advisory Committees (BAC) discuss the issue of participation. He said that people often think that taking the tests is not necessary if a student does not intend to go to college. About 60% of colleges require the SAT, he said.

Committee Co-chair Holly Rollins said the Palmer Ridge High School BAC discussed the issue at length and said that many requirements changed during the COVID epidemic. Each family must decide and follow the given rules. A student not taking the test may be able to enter the university of their choice but not the specific college within the university.

Strategic plan discussion

The district's strategic plan consists of six priorities: safe and healthy schools, academic excellence, valuing our people, operations and facilities, fiscal stewardship, and relationships and communication.

Somers said that a dashboard is being added to the district website (lewispalmer.org) which will track activity relating to each priority.

Rollins said that she wishes that the committee stress its responsibility to act in an advisory capacity to the board.

Whetstine implemented this idea by creating a large sheet of paper for each priority and having members indicate what questions they have regarding each and what they would wish to address during

the coming year. Results of this exercise will be available at a future meeting.

Board of Education update

Board liaison Tiffney Upchurch reported that Theresa Phillips and Matthew Clawson will be leaving the board after the November election. They will be recognized at the Nov. 27 board meeting.

Beginning in October, Lewis-Palmer High School and Palmer Ridge High School will each have a representative on the board.

Regarding the November election, four seats on the board will be on the ballot. Three seats are unopposed and the fourth has two candidates.

Upchurch reminded members of the candidate forum on Sept. 28 at Palmer Ridge High School. For information on the election, please see lewispalmer.org/election.

Committee updates

Several committees had yet to meet in the new year.

Chief Business Officer Brett Ridgway reported on the Financial Transparency Committee (formerly the Financial Advisory Committee). This committee is required by state statute and will consist of nine members: five from the Parent and Community Advisory Committee and four from other sources. Public members must have an administrative sponsor. Meetings will be held in public. Responsibilities of the committee include following the annual cycle of events related to the budget, recommending how to spend district resources, and recommending ways to maintain transparency by communicating district business to the community.

Committee membership will be announced at an upcoming board meeting.

Whetstine reported on the Calendar Committee. She said that the priority of the committee at this time is to construct a potential calendar if the district were to convert to four-day weeks. This calendar will be presented to the staff and they would be asked if they would stay with the district if it were implemented.

Whetstine also said that there is an active task force discussing the issue of consent. The task force is led by community members and will discuss issues such as boundaries. The group will present recommendations at the October meeting of the board.

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The Wellness Committee continues to concentrate on meeting requirements for the School Lunch Program.

The Special Education Advisory Committee and Gifted/Talented Leadership Team have not yet met.

New co-chair appointed

Rollins said that the leadership of the Parent and Community Advisory Committee is based on two co-chairs, each with a two-year term. Rollins’ term ends next June.

Renee Butler, a representative of

Lewis-Palmer Elementary School, volunteered to serve and was confirmed by a vote of the membership.

The Parent and Community Advisory Committee meets six times per year. Locations vary. The next meeting will

be on Oct. 10 from 6 to 8 p.m. at Palmer Lake Elementary School, 115 Upper Glenway in Palmer Lake. For further information, please contact tmckee@lewispalmer.org.

Harriet Halbig can be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me.

Monument Academy School Board, Sept. 14 and 20

MA responds to ACLU, prepares for budget amendment

By Jackie Burhans

At its Sept. 14 meeting, the Monument Academy (MA) board heard their lawyer’s response to the ACLU and prepared to amend its budget, review carline safety concerns, and consider revisions to its employee handbook. At a special meeting on Sept. 20, the board continued the discussion of its emergency operations procedure (EOP) and employee handbook.

Lawyer responds to ACLU demand letter

Board President Ryan Graham noted that MA had received a demand letter from the ACLU with a deadline of Aug. 31 to respond. The demand letter addressed what the ACLU considered unlawful actions by MA and its board, undermining the safety of LGBTQ+ students and flouting state and federal laws. See <https://ocn.me/v23n9.htm#ma> for more information.

Graham read the letter from the ACLU and then read the response the board sent on Aug. 31 through its legal counsel, Brad Miller of Miller Farmer Carson Law LLC.

The response from Miller confirmed that he represented MA and its board and asserted that the ACLU’s understanding was incorrect. He said that while MA had recently adopted a resolution, the ACLU’s characterization was incorrect. The resolution was simply an expression of parents’ rights and voice in education, he said. Finally, he finished by saying that he did not find any mention in the letter of who the ACLU purported to represent.

Graham indicated there was no current litigation and that the board would stand firm.

Budget adjustments anticipated

With the absence of MA’s financial consultant Glenn Gustafson, Graham reported on his behalf that the audit was nearly complete, the 2023-24 budget was loaded into the financial system, and the payroll conversion had begun but had some errors that delayed the project to bring purchasing in-house.

The board adopted the FY23-24 budget in June 2023 and will need

budget adjustments in the fall and late January. Some expenditure items were under budget, Graham reported. This will mean reductions to an already tight budget and require MA to maintain budget discipline.

In the Finance Committee report, board member Joe Buczkowski emphasized that Gustafson’s report had initially budgeted enrollment at 1,180. He said enrollment was below the budget at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The October count would also impact the budget, and some cost-cutting would have to occur at that point, he said. He noted there may also be additional revenue, including earnings from moving certificates of deposit (CDs) to achieve higher interest rates.

Carline safety concerns

Officer Maxwelle Ellis, MA’s school resource officer (SRO), addressed concerns about the Highway 105 construction and safety. He noted that, while growing pains would happen, phase 4 would be better. Ellis, who works for the Monument Police Department (MPD), noted that MPD has no jurisdiction over Highway 105, which belongs to the county. The construction project is being done under the Pikes Peak Rural Transit Authority (PPRTA), with others trying to help as much as possible.

Ellis said he sees the frustrations and experiences the hostility but prefers that people bring their concerns to him rather than taking them out on MA staff. Parents coming early are adding to the frustration, he said, but the number of violations has dropped dramatically. He asked for patience and compassion and reiterated that people should come to him and contact him via email at mellis@tomgov.org.

Graham reported that the recirculation road was almost complete, with permanent fencing coming soon. MA would be moving into Phase 2 of carline procedures through December, with Phase 3 incorporating the new Knollwood roundabout. He asked that K-5 families not arrive before 3:15 p.m. for pickup and not block the Vision Center clients from exiting. He said MA would not tolerate families berating others and could and would revoke

carline privileges if necessary.

Employee handbook discussed

At the Sept. 14 meeting, Krista Pelley, director of people operations, led the discussion of changes to the 2023-24 Employee Handbook. She directed the board to focus on the portion of the handbook that impacts pay and time off requests, noting that in previous years it had not differentiated between sick and personal leave. The proposed policy would adjust the cap of leave accrual, differentiate between leave types, use half-hour increments, and implement new work calendars. This area was important to solidify so it could be entered into the financial system so employees could know how much leave they have and begin to request it.

Another area of change in the handbook covers purchase orders and financial information, which was significantly out of date. To update this section, she is looking at D38, D20, and other charter school policies. She will consult with Gustafson and the financial team about changes to purchasing.

In addition, Pelley said she was removing everything that is procedural from the handbook as principals have created procedural guides for staff. She also noted that she was reviewing board policies to see how that would impact the handbook. Board member Karen Hoida noted a section in the handbook regarding conflict resolution that conflicted with policy 1518A. Hoida suggested the handbook should simply refer to the policy. Pelley agreed and asked for clarification of the teacher representative policy. Graham noted that wasn’t mandated in the handbook. Finally, Pelley asked for board input on the teacher-student communication section for language around social media.

Pelley said she would love for the board to further review sections but wanted to segment out staff leave and approve that. Graham said he felt comfortable knowing that legal was involved and had seen it. Buczkowski said he would rather not pass it today. Graham tabled this item to discuss at the upcoming special meeting.

At the Sept. 20 special meeting, the board took up the discussion of the handbook again, starting with a comment from Graham that he had heard that a couple of administrators needed time to review the document and suggested postponing approvals until October. Pelley emphasized that staff was waiting to hear on leave policies and that she and Gustafson had removed much of the finance policy and purchase order information out of the handbook.

Lindsay Clinton, board vice president, suggested that in the future, discussions of the handbook should be penciled in for the June agenda so that it would be available for new hires. Graham said he would oppose any approval of the handbook until all administrators had a chance to review it. Buczkowski said he had reviewed other sections and felt they were fine but that the document could be better organized. The meeting adjourned to executive session without taking a vote on the employee handbook.

Highlights

Board meeting highlights include:

- Board member Craig Carle spotlighted the work of Kristi Hayes, preschool director, for doing a phenomenal job managing the carline at MA West. She is a guiding light for parents, he said. He appreciated her leadership and said she and her team were “the epitome of resilience.”
- High School Principal David Kennington presented the EOP plan intended to standardize MA’s initial response to expected crises, including coordination and communication through a safe school plan as required by state law CRS 22-32-109.1(2). Although the plan was not reviewed by legal counsel, the board unanimously adopted it with the intent to continue updating the plan.
- At the Sept. 20 special meeting, Buczkowski said he had reviewed the statute regarding the safe school plan and identified some missing items such as a written evaluation after exercises or incidents, annual inventory and testing of safety equipment, having school personnel complete training courses, and including SROs. He also noted that the school is supposed to have a policy on annual inspection of buildings to address the removal of barriers to safety and supervision. Buczkowski offered to share this information with Kennington and to work with the Governance Committee to develop the needed policy.
- Curriculum policies IIAC-MA, IIAC-E1-MA, IIAE-E2-MA, IJ-MA and IJ-E1-MA were passed unanimously with minor changes from what was discussed at the previous meeting. Approved MA board policies can be found at <https://bit.ly/ma-bd-policies>.
- The board approved a contract for the 2023-24 fiscal year, as recommended by Gustafson, to engage CLOCworks Inc. to install equipment to monitor and optimize energy costs for a \$4,800 installation fee and \$500 per month management fee. Gustafson felt these fees could be recouped in three or four months, and MA would realize savings in the long term.
- The board unanimously approved changes to the preschool policies and procedures as Hayes and Elementary Principal Kurt Walker requested. Changes included removing language about “Love and Logic” principles, changing the word “rules” to “social contract,” and removing language in the behavior and discipline section referring to mental health personnel since none is available at MA West.

The MA School Board meets at 6:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. The next regular board meeting will be on Thursday, Oct. 12, at 6:30 p.m. at the East Campus. See more information at [see https://bit.ly/ma-boe](https://bit.ly/ma-boe). Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

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Above: At its Sept. 14 meeting, board Director Craig Carle, right, spotlighted Preschool Director Kristi Hayes, left, for doing a phenomenal job with her team in managing the carline at Monument Academy’s West campus. Photo by Jackie Burhans.

Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education, Sept. 18

Prairie Winds students win national award; Education Foundation reactivated



Above:Sixth-graders Amelia Ashby, Sloan Clary, and Annabel Montero from Prairie Winds Elementary School, flanked on the left by D38 Board President Tiffiney Upchurch and on the right by teacher Deb Kimple, were celebrated for winning the President’s Environmental Youth Award for their project to reduce waste by composting green waste from the school cafeteria and using it in the school’s garden. The students gave a slide presentation on the process of submitting the application and their trip to Washington, D.C., and created a video on the project for the Colorado Environmental Film Festival. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

By Harriet Halbig
The Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education celebrated achievements of its students and teachers at its Sept. 18 meeting.

President’s Environmental Youth Award

Sixth-graders Amelia Ashby, Sloan Clary, and Annabel Montero from Prairie Winds Elementary School were awarded the President’s Environmental Youth Award for their project to reduce waste by composting green waste from the school cafeteria and using it in the school’s garden.

The students gave a slide presentation on the process of submitting the application and their trip to Washington, D.C. to receive the award. They thanked their teacher Deb Kimple and science teacher Pam Cooley for their help. Principal Brittney Coveney was also on hand to congratulate the students.

The students have created a video on the project for the Colorado Environmental Film Festival and hope to monitor continuation of the program after they leave Prairie Winds.

Another award recipient is Bear Creek Elementary School teacher Jennifer Stalko, who received the Air Force Academy Extra Yard Award.

D38 Education Foundation reactivated

The D38 Education Foundation was originally created in 1994 under Superintendent Ted Bauman and was active until 2009. Since that time, members of the Board of Education have kept legal and tax documents current.

Executive Director Stephanie Palzkill reported on the reorganization and activities of the foundation.

The Board of Trustees of the foundation consists of seven members representing such entities as the Tri-Lakes Chamber, Monument Hill Kiwanis, the Board of Education, and district parents who have served in various capacities on district committees. Superintendent KC Somers is a non-voting member of the board.

The mission of the foundation is to elevate education through community connections, to champion educators and foster creativity and innovation, to attract and retain educators, and to educate the community about the unique strengths of the district.

The foundation will fund two grants. The Inspire program grant will reward innovation and the Advance program grant will fund professional development.

Funds in the Foundation account, previously transferred to the district, were transferred back into an individual bank account by the board later in the meeting. The funds are sufficient to support awarding the grants for this year. Palzkill said applications for the Inspire grant would be available by Oct. 15 with a deadline of Nov. 30. Members of the Board of Trustees will visit each school to explain the program.

Finalists will be chosen by Dec. 15 and recipients will be notified in January.

Palzkill stressed that the foundation does not intend to supplant any other sources of revenue in support of the district. Instead, it will seek corporate sponsorship and offer the opportunity for individuals to donate to the cause. The foundation will also administer the pre-existing Adopt D38 group which made it possible to sponsor a teacher, class, or school.

Board President Tiffiney Upchurch asked whether volunteers are needed. Palzkill responded that individuals should get on the foundation mailing list at d38foundation.org and that help will be needed next year to create fund-raising events.

Assessment presentation
Assistant Superintendent Amber Whetstine and Assessment Coordinator Michael Brom explained results of last spring’s Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS), Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), and Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).

Brom said the growth aspect of the assessments was based on two consecutive years of test scores. No assessments were given in 2020 due to the pandemic and fewer than usual were given in 2021. Consequently, 2023 is the first year in some time when two consecutive years’ scores are available.

Overall, the district performed well, according to Whetstine. Although the district still has not achieved pre-pandemic performance, growth puts it in the 87th percentile in the state.

Brom commented that the district does not test all grades each year, but it exceeds the benchmark 65th percentile. Anything over the 50th meets state requirements.

Whetstine said that students are compared with like-performing peers throughout the state. Operated and charter schools are both included in the district performance framework.

When asked whether SAT scores are necessary, Brom responded that about 50% of colleges require it. Students are encouraged to take it to have more options, especially if seeking a scholarship.

Whetstine said Lewis-Palmer and Palmer Ridge High Schools were put on improvement plans (as opposed to performance plans) this year due to low participation in the PSAT and SAT tests. Somers commented that Colorado is one of a few states in which students can opt out of taking the tests with a form from parents. Whetstine said that Building Advisory Committees at both schools are being encouraged to explain the importance of these forms to parents.

Brom said the PSAT and SAT tests will be administered digitally this year for the first time. Consequently, students may have more options as to the date they will be tested. Previously there was one test date and one make-

up date for each.

Accreditation of Schools
Whetstine explained that each school district is accredited by the state. D38 is accredited with distinction by achieving over 74 points of a possible 100. The district has been accredited with distinction each year since the category was created.

Whetstine explained that each school also has a universal improvement plan. These plans measure academic achievement, academic growth and, in the case of high schools, rates of graduation, dropouts, and matriculation referred to as post-secondary workforce readiness.

Matriculation refers to the number of students who will enter a two- to four-year institution, technical training, military institutes, or military active duty immediately after graduation. This does not include students who have been earning college credit during high school through concurrent enrollment.

The board passed a motion to accredit the district’s schools.

To view the district and school universal performance information, please see boarddocs on the district website, lewispalmer.org, under Board of Education.

Superintendent update
In his update, Somers spoke of a recent staff rally and the success of the Battle of Monument football game where students raised \$3,000 for the Folds of Honor charity to provide scholarships to families of fallen first responders and veterans.

He also announced that the local YMCA will resume sponsoring Real Alternative to Drugs and Drinking (RAD) nights. He thanked the local Tri-Lakes Rotary and Tri-Lakes Women’s Club for providing refreshments.

Somers thanked the Palmer Ridge and Lewis-Palmer Middle School communities for their patience with traffic problems and Lewis-Palmer Elementary for its patience with building issues.

The Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education usually meets at 6 p.m. on the third Monday of the month at the district’s education center, 146 Jefferson St., Monument. The next meeting will be on Oct. 23. For information, please contact vwood@lewispalmer.org.

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Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, Sept. 18

Contracts awarded for infrastructure

By James Howald
Construction contracts were the focus of the Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) at its September meeting. The board awarded two new contracts and changed the award of a third to a different company. It continued the discussion of water and sewer tap fees that began in its previous meeting, hearing a presentation from the consultants that provide the district with rates analysis. The board also heard operational reports.

Two new contracts awarded
District Manager Jessie Shaffer gave the board a summary of the scope of work included in the construction contract for the Well 22 pumphouse project. Well 22 is south of County Line Road and east of I-25, and the drilling was completed in July 2022. The project includes the construction of the well house, the installation of the well’s pump, motor, and drop pipe, and associated piping, electrical support, and controls.

Richard Hood, of JVA Inc., an engineering company that advises WWSD, told the board that four bids for the project were received and Native Sun Construction was the low bidder at \$1.17 million. Hood said Paintbrush Hills Metropolitan District, Woodmen Hills Metropolitan District and the City of Boulder gave Native Sun Construction positive recommendations.

Hood recommended that the board award the contract to Native Sun Construction, and the board voted unanimously to do so.

Rachel Frei, of BB&A Water Consultants Inc., presented her recommendations for the drilling, construction, and testing of a new Dawson aquifer well, to be drilled on the site of the Central Water Treatment Plant (CWTP), which is on Deer Creek Road adjacent to the Lewis-Palmer Middle School football field.

Frei said the proposed well would be designed to a different standard than other WWSD wells. Previously, WWSD

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has used the municipal standard for its wells, Frei said, but the last long-range plan completed by the district allows for some new wells to be built to the standard for commercial wells, which typically use lower quality and less expensive hardware components. Additional savings result from using smaller drilling rigs, she said. Commercial grade wells are usually 77% less expensive than wells built to the municipal standard.

Frei estimated the new well would produce 25 gallons per minute. WWSD's Arapahoe aquifer wells typically produce 200 or more gallons per minute.

Shaffer said the well would be a test case for the district. He pointed out the commercial standard involved a bit more risk but would provide a much lower cost per acre-foot of water produced. The proximity to the CWTP meant less would be spent on pipeline and on building to house the well.

Frei recommended that the contract be awarded to Winegar Well Service LLC, which bid \$219,315 for the project. The board voted unanimously to award the contract as Frei suggested.

Contract re-awarded

At its previous meeting in August, the board awarded a contract to install the infrastructure for a new pressure reduction zone required by the Monument Junction development to Aslan Construction. Classic Homes, the developer

of Monument Junction, was to be responsible for a portion of the project, but in August the WWSD board believed that Classic Homes would have WWSD manage the project and be reimbursed by Classic Homes for its portion of the work. Details about the original award of the contract can be found in a previous issue of Our Community News here: <https://www.ocn.me/v23n9.htm#wwsd>.

In September, Shaffer told the board there had been new developments. Classic Homes opted to use their own contractor to do its share of the work, he said, and Aslan Construction notified him that it had made a \$170,000 error in its bid. As a result, Aslan withdrew its bid, Shaffer said.

Shaffer said he did not recommend rebidding the project. He recommended that the board award the contract to Midcity Corp., which had bid on the work along with Aslan.

After some discussion to sort out the consequences of Classic Homes choosing to use its own contractor rather than let WWSD manage the entire project and be reimbursed, the board voted unanimously to authorize Shaffer to move forward with Midcity's bid of \$438,722.

Tap fee debate continues

At its previous meeting, the board heard a presentation on tap fee strategy from Andrew Rheem of Raftelis, a company that advises WWSD on rates

and fees. At that meeting, the board voted to authorize Raftelis to continue its work, begun a year ago, to help determine how WWSD should set its water and sewer tap fees to ensure the district can fund the cost of service delivery and capital improvements looking out 10 years.

At the September meeting, Rheem and his colleague Harold Smith presented some preliminary results. They said they had developed scenarios that addressed issues such as how WWSD will finance its portion of the water re-use project often referred to as "The Loop," which will build infrastructure to allow WWSD and other participating water districts to divert water from Fountain Creek, including treated effluent, and return it for reuse by customers.

Rheem and Smith said they estimated the final build-out of the WWSD service area would occur by 2042, with 6,500 connections to the water distribution system and 6,200 connections to the sewer system. They calculated the Replacement Cost New (RCN) of those systems to be \$134.87 million. RCN is the amount it would cost to build systems of equal capacity at today's prices and is a factor when tap fees are considered as a fee to buy a share in an existing system.

The discussion that followed raised some questions about the assumptions used to calculate the RCN. Operations Superintendent Dan LaFontaine pointed out that devel-

opers build pipes at their expense that are later conveyed to the district and asked how that was built into the RCN calculation. Other issues were how \$7 million in recent capital improvements were calculated into the RCN, and how to account for the debt incurred by the purchase of Woodmoor Ranch, the debt service for which is paid by district customers every month in the form of the \$40 per month Renewable Water Infrastructure Fee.

Uncertainty about how The Loop water reuse project would be financed—with revenue bonds or general obligation bonds that would require a vote for approval—complicated the issue of future tap fees.

Rheem and Smith presented a case for raising water tap fees, which are one-time fees paid when a new building is connected to the water distribution system, by \$12,000 to \$42,000. Board President Brian Bush argued that increase could not be made in one year. He also pointed out that federal and state regulations governing water quality were not likely to remain unchanged for 10 years and new regulations would impact the cost of delivering water to customers. Shaffer said the increase suggested by Rheem and Smith would raise objections on the part of developers.

The board did not vote following the discussion. Rheem and Smith said they would continue to work on their

analysis, taking into consideration the questions raised.

Highlights of operational reports

- In his financial report, board Treasurer Roy Martinez said that revenue from water sales was down due to the unusually rainy summer and spring.
- The 12-month rolling average for unaccounted water is 5%, which is low by industry standards.
- 1,400 of the district's residential water meters have been replaced with newer meters that are better integrated with the district's billing system and support advanced functions such as helping customers avoid unexpectedly large water bills by notifying them when there is a leak on their property.
- WWSD is issuing water taps for the west side of the Monument Junction development.

The next meeting is scheduled for Oct. 9 at 1 p.m. Meetings are usually held on the second Monday of each month at 1 p.m. at the district office at 1845 Woodmoor Drive; please see www.woodmoorwater.com or call 719-488-2525 to verify meeting times and locations.

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

Monument Sanitation District, Sept. 20

Board approves email policy, plans building improvements

By Jackie Burhans and James Howald

The Monument Sanitation District (MSD) board met in September to vote on a resolution outlining the district's email policy. It discussed a preliminary draft of a proposed 2024 budget and took up issues concerning improvements and repairs of the district's headquarters building.

District email for business use only

State law requires governmental organizations that maintain email systems to have a written policy governing their proper use. District Manager Mark Parker told the board that work on MSD's email policy was begun with their previous lawyer and was now ready for a vote.

Resolution 9202023-1 specifies:

- MSD's email system is owned by the district and is limited to messages related to district business. Personal or private messages are not allowed.
- Use of personal email systems for district busi-

ness is not allowed and may subject the district to discovery orders, seizure, and inspection in the event of litigation.

- Messages sent through the district's email are public records and are available to the public through Colorado Open Record Act requests.
- The district may monitor messages sent through its email system.
- The email system is an extension of the workplace and is subject to the district's personnel policies.

Board President Dan Hamilton summed up the policy by pointing out that there is no privacy in use of the email system. Parker pointed out that board members would need to be careful in their use of the "Reply All" feature, as emails going to three or more board members constitute a meeting. Parker said he used the blind carbon copy feature to prevent board members from inadvertently creating a meeting by replying to everyone on the distribution list.

The board voted unanimously to approve the resolution.

Preliminary 2024 budget discussed

Parker gave the board a preliminary draft of the 2024 budget and asked for their feedback at the next board meeting. He said he estimates income low and expenses high, and that generally works out. Legal and engineering fees were underestimated in the previous budget. Legal fees were somewhat higher than expected in the 2023 budget because of the legal work needed on the district's bylaws and employee handbook. For the 2024 budget, he assumed a 10 percent increase in worker's compensation costs and a large increase in the cost of gas and electricity. Interest income is up due to higher interest rates, he said.

Parker pointed out that MSD could impose a 7.734 mill levy, but that was not needed because the district is able to cover its cost of service through tap fees and user fees.

HQ building needs roof repair, HVAC upgrade

MSD owns the building at 130 Second St. that houses the of-

fice space and conference room used by the district, as well as three businesses: the Black Forest Foods Café and Deli, Santa Fe Trail Jewelry, and the Second Street Hair Studio.

Parker told the board that, due to age and hail damage, the building's roof needs to be replaced. The cost of replacement is less than the insurance deductible, he explained, so MSD will be paying for the replacement. Parker said he was working with the district's insurance carrier to find alternatives to the current deductible.

Parker asked the board to consider paying for an engineering study to design a comprehensive solution to the building's problems with heating and ventilation. The Black Forest Foods Café and Deli kitchen has created issues with ventilation that were not anticipated when the building was designed. The kitchen hoods pull air out of the building and makeup air is needed to run the building's furnace efficiently, he said. The study would need to assess whether the rafters can support the needed equipment as well as the snow load in the winter months. The building's electric

service would also need to be included. Parker estimated the study cost at \$5,500.

MSD Environmental/Regulatory Compliance Coordinator Jim Kendrick pointed out that over the last 20 years contractors who addressed issues stemming from the restaurant kitchen have put in place ad hoc solutions. He argued the cost of a comprehensive study and design would be money well spent.

The board did not take a vote but agreed that Parker should proceed with the proposed study.

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 Oct. 18. See <https://colorado.gov/msd>. For a district service map, see <https://colorado.gov/pacific/msd/district-map-0>. Information: 719-481-4886.

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Donala Water and Sanitation District, Sept. 21

Preliminary 2024 budget presented

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

At its September meeting, Donala Water and Sanitation District (DWSD) General Manager Jeff Hodge and Accounts Payable specialist Christine Hawker presented a preliminary draft of the district's 2024 budget. The board awarded a contract for rehabilitating the district's water tanks, updated a lease to sell effluent water, and made plans to sell a surplus variable frequency drive (VFD). Finally, district staff updated the board concerning the district's testing of hydrous manganese oxide (HMO) to reduce radium in its treated water.

2024 budget overview

The preliminary budget presented showed an increase in total revenue from \$6.86 million projected for 2023 to \$7.60 million budgeted for 2024. Water sales and interest income are projected to increase in 2024. Property tax revenue for 2024 was projected to be \$2.24 million; that number reflects a \$600,000 decrease in the county's assessment due to the possibility of Proposition HH passing. Hodge said the 2024 budget assumes the district will not see any increase in revenue from increased property taxes.

On the expense side, total operating expenses are estimated to increase from \$4.92 million projected for 2023

to \$6.24 million budgeted for 2024. In the 2024 budget, \$365,351 was moved from administrative expenses to operating expenses because upgraded accounting software enables better tracking of contract services. Utility costs for 2024 are budgeted to increase by \$257,000 due to an estimated 10% increase in electrical costs by Mountain View Electrical Association. Engineering costs and well maintenance costs are also projected to increase in 2024.

Total capital and bond expense is estimated to increase from \$3.44 million projected for 2023 to \$4.31 million budgeted for 2023.

DONALA (Cont. on 20)

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DONALA (Cont. from 18)

A total of \$3.57 million was budgeted for capital improvement projects in 2024, with rehabilitation of three storage tanks, filter media rehabilitation at the R. Hull treatment plant, and funding for “The Loop” water reuse project at the top of the list.

Hodge emphasized that water and sewer revenue would cover the district’s operating expenses, and he estimated DWSD would have \$8 million in reserves.

Board President Wayne Vanderschuere said the budget would need to be presented to the state by Oct. 15 and the board would hold a special meeting on Oct. 12 to formally accept a final 2024 budget.

Water tank rehab contract awarded

Hodge recommended the board award a contract for water tank rehabilitation to Viking Painting LLC, which bid \$1.05 million to rehabilitate the district’s three tanks. The contract had previously been awarded to Swedish Industrial Coatings LLC, but that company was unable to do the work.

The board voted unanimously to award the contract as Hodge suggested.

Effluent water lease extended

Hodge asked the board to consider extending for two years a contract for DWSD to lease up to 6.5 acre-feet of effluent water per year to Letha Robison. The state of Colorado requires pond owners to replace water lost to evaporation. Hodge explained the new contract would raise the price of the water from \$150 per acre-foot to \$300. The board voted unanimously to extend the contract.

Surplus VFD to be sold

Hodge told the board he had a buyer for a VFD the district is taking offline. VFDs control the operation of the motors that drive well pumps and allow them to ramp up or down smoothly rather than being completely on or completely off, thereby saving energy costs and reducing the wear and tear on pipelines. Water Operator Ronny Wright said he expected the VFD to be sold for \$7,500.

HMO testing moves forward

Wright updated the board on the status of the demonstration project the district is running to prove that treatment with HMO will reduce to acceptable lev-

els the radium in the water delivered to customers. Wright said samples treated with HMO were taken between Sept. 11 and 17 have been submitted for testing. Two more samples will be taken in mid-October and in November, he said, adding he expected results by late December. When all results are received, the district will have 30 days to send the results to the state. Wright said he anticipated the state would respond by April, allowing DWSD to proceed with the design of an HMO-based radium treatment process.

The next meeting is scheduled for Oct. 19 at 1:30 p.m. Generally, board meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at 1:30 p.m. and include online access; call (719) 488-3603 or access www.donalawater.org to receive up-to-date meeting information. The district office is located at 15850 Holbein Drive, Colorado Springs.

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Triview Metropolitan District, Sept. 21

Northern Delivery System pipeline installation nearing completion

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Triview Metropolitan District (TMD) meeting on Sept. 21, the board received updates on the Northern Delivery System (NDS) Pipeline Project and the release of water deeds, and heard about wastewater flow monitoring and a system to remove radium. The board also approved a small lease of water shares, heard about a revegetation program, and received an update on the Higby Road widening project. The district also held an executive session to receive legal advice regarding various negotiations on water supply contracts, property acquisitions, strategic planning, and change cases.

Director Amanda Carlton attended remotely; however, sound communication was unavailable for the participants attending via Zoom for the duration of the meeting.

Northern Delivery System pipeline project

District Manager Jim McGrady said he attended a get-together with the Kiewit employees as the NDS project reached 100 days and is about 75% completed on the pipeline installation. The closeout for the pipeline portion of the project is anticipated to be the end of November and everything is on schedule, he said. Roller Coaster Road will be completed by mid-October, and Old Northgate Road is expected to be completed by the end of September. The pumphouse at Highway 83/Old Northgate Road is estimated to be completed in July 2024, he said.

President Mark Melville said the pump station had many long lead-time items. The district was able to purchase an electrical transformer from Mountain View Electric Association ahead of time and well before construction, he said.

Note: For NDS pipeline project updates, alternative traffic routes, road closures, answers to questions, and to sign-up for email and text notifications, visit www.triviewnds.com. The link can also be found at www.triviewmetro.com.

Release of water deeds

McGrady said the Stonewall Springs South Reservoir is full. TMD and the Arkansas Ground and Reservoir Association (AGRA) water rights contributed to filling the reservoir. The district will begin running the NDS in less than a year and will need municipal water to run the pipeline. The district may need to lease a little water next year until all the decrees for the municipal water are in place. Some of the AGRA water could be utilized to supply the NDS, along with 500 shares (about 350 acre-feet) of the Fountain Mutual Irrigation Co. (FMIC). A portion of the 557 shares of FMIC, which the district is changing to municipal water shares, will likely be decreed after the 2024 runoff. The district will have a plan B and will pump water from its wells if needed to fully supply the district customers he said.

Melville said the district needs about 900-1,000 acre-feet annually, but the plan has always been to use about 20% well water and keep the wells in use, he said.

Water flows examined

Assistant District Manager Steve Sheffield said Xuehua Bai of Bai Engineers is examining and taking measurements of the water flows at the Upper Monument Creek Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility (UMCRWWTF). The district is not 100% confident in the accuracy of the flow numbers that are released from the treatment facility and is double checking Triview’s existing flow measurement devices, he said.

Superintendent Shawn Sexton confirmed a new flow meter at the Upper Monument Creek Waste Water Treatment Facility (UMCRWWTF) had been replaced a couple of years ago. The district is keeping up with high summer water demand, and during August the district had a 9.7% variance (unaccounted water due to pipeline leakage), which is not uncommon. Nationwide some municipalities have up to 40% unaccounted water losses. The district is drilling down on losses, because previously the numbers presented were not the whole picture, he said.

Vice President Anthony Sexton said the 9.7% is a whole lot tighter than previous months, but it would be interesting to know why there are fluctuations in lost water between the summer months and the winter months, he said.

McGrady said Bai is taking readings on a flume every 15 minutes over 24 hours to capture 96 reads, then using an integration formula the district will know the volume that travelled through the flume in 24 hours. It will be important to identify the cause and the correct flows to the treatment facility as the decision to participate in the Northern Monument

Creek Interceptor (NCMI) pipeline draws closer. The pipeline capacity will need to be accurate to accommodate the correct amount of wastewater. The cause could be metering or infiltration, he said.

Hydrous manganese oxide (HMO) system

Sexton said the district is almost done with the hydrous manganese oxide (HMO) redesign and rebuild, and it looks completely different from the original design, and it will be “awesome.” He had attended the Rocky Mountain Water Conference from Sept. 10-13 in Loveland, with Lead Engineer Mario DiPasquale of RESPEC (formerly JDS Hydro). DiPasquale presented the HMO system to about 30 attendees, and after the presentation Sexton helped DiPasquale answer questions.

TMD and one other small district statewide are adopting the HMO system. The system consists of a combination of suspended manganese oxide particles that form a slurry, and when combined with raw water the chemical affixes to radium and the particles are large enough to be removed via filter, making it possible to easily remove when the filters are backwashed, he said.

McGrady said Donala Water and Sanitation District is implementing the HMO system after consulting with the TMD team. The system makes sense and works very well at a very reasonable cost compared to other systems, he said. Radium testing takes up to three months to complete. and then further testing is required. It took TMD about a year to complete and comply with the state requirements. The district is trying to spread the word about the economic benefit of the HMO system. TMD implemented the HMO system because other methods of removal are expensive. Radium is not just a Front Range issue, he said.

Melville said the HMO system will remove radium at a low cost of about \$200,000, unlike some systems that require separate plants and cost over \$1 million.

Director Jason Gross thanked Sexton and his team for going the extra mile, making the district exceptional just by taking the time to discover the HMO system.

Lease of water shares

McGrady said he was approached by Curtis Mitchell, a consultant for Cross Creek Metropolitan District (CCMD) located between Widefield and Fountain Boulevard near Mesa Ridge High School. Mitchell requested a small lease of six shares to offset evaporative losses in a small sub-division pond that the state had mandated be drained due to evaporation loss. The agreement is a good neighbor relations project, and the district makes a little revenue in the process. He requested the board review and consider approving the agreement between CCMD and the TMD for the lease of six shares from the FMIC for three years from Nov. 1 through Oct. 31, 2026, to augment evaporative losses on the pond located within CCMD.

Water Attorney Chris Cummins said the district always includes a reclaim clause should the district need the water, but he had not written the agreement and would need to confirm. The lease provides only 4.2 acre-feet to offset evaporation in a small pond adjacent to a play area. If the provision to reclaim the water is needed by the district and is not already included, it will be added, he said.

The board unanimously accepted the agreement with a retraction clause should the district need the water.

Revegetation plan

McGrady said TMD hired retired Colorado State University Professor Ed Rendente, an expert restoration ecologist, to work for the district on a revegetation plan at the Chicago Springs Ranch, located near Buena Vista and the place of use for the district’s Arkansas Valley Irrigation Co. water right. The land is covered by various grasses. After the irrigation water is removed, most of the hay and some species of grass will die out and the other intermixed vegetation is expected to thrive. A reference property near that has never been irrigated will mimic that land, but it could take 10 years or more, he said.

Cummins said the division engineer office mandates rules and regulations to implement a revegetation plan after irrigation rights are removed to prevent dust bowl conditions, he said.

Higby Road widening project

McGrady said the Higby Road widening project design was approved. The road will be about 95-100 feet wide, about 20 feet less than Jackson Creek Parkway. The design also incorporates two roundabouts:



Above: Triview Metropolitan District received a 900-ECO 12-yard Vactor truck in early September. The multi-use vehicle with many capabilities besides cleaning sewer systems will be utilized both residentially and commercially throughout the district and in Forest Lakes Metropolitan District. The district spent about \$560,000 on the truck and expects to see a cost savings in a couple of years by avoiding costly outsourced services. *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*

one about midway of the Lewis-Palmer High School south parking lot for entry purposes, and the second at Bowstring Road. Until the district can figure out how to incorporate a sidewalk on the northeast side near the school baseball fields, two crosswalks will be installed to reach the sidewalk on the south side of the road, he said.

Public works, parks, and open space update

Superintendent Matt Rayno said the following:

- The district had received the radar speed signs for Promontory Pointe and installation had begun. The 25-mile-per-hour sign would be removed.
- He and the snow captain would attend a snow and ice removal conference to receive continued certification in snow removal.
- The district purchased a dump truck with a snow plow for snow removal.

Gross said he likes the increase in service to the residents.

McGrady said the district was able to find a used diesel truck for about \$37,000 sitting on a lot with only 50,000 miles on the odometer and a snow plow. The truck was then sandblasted, re-painted and fitted with a new sander for \$16,000. The final cost was about \$53,000 instead of about \$150,000 for a new truck.

Melville suggested the large flat drainage pond that receives little runoff between Split Creek and Gleneagle Drive could be put to recreational use with a little bit more mowing and a couple of soccer nets.

McGrady said metropolitan districts in the Phoenix, Ariz., area have utilized dry retention pond areas for recreation, and he would look into utilization of the space.

During public comments, a resident said he was very happy about how his taxes are being spent by the district, especially when he sees the beautiful landscaping work and how great the district looks.

Executive session

The board moved into executive session at about 7:23 p.m. pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes 24-6-402(4) (a), (b), (e), to discuss acquisitions, receive legal advice regarding negotiations on water supply contracts, property acquisitions, strategic planning and change cases.

After the meeting, Sheffield confirmed that when the board returned to the regular meeting, no further action was taken.

The meeting adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

Correction

In the September issue of OCN, the TMD article should have read: "Rocky Mountain Turf Solutions are installing 115,600 square feet of UV-protected AstroTurf for the multi-use sporting field in Sanctuary Pointe." After the September issue was published, McGrady provided the following information: The TMD Board of Directors approved \$1 million from the parks and open spaces fees collected from the Sanctuary Pointe development for the AstroTurf installation. TMD collected just over \$2 million at the point of construction, about \$3,373 for each of the 600 homes in Sanctuary Pointe. About \$1,666 per home was contributed to the park from those fees. The Homeowners Association fees were not used in the development of

the park. OCN regrets the error.

Meetings are usually held on the third Thursday every

month at the district office at 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Oct.19 at 5:30 p.m. For meeting agendas, minutes,

and updates, visit <https://triviewmetro.com>.
Natalie Barszcz can be reached at nataliebarszcz@ocn.me.

El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority, Sept. 21

Board approves outreach to contractors

By James Howald
At its September meeting, the El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority (EPCRLWA) board heard a plan from its recently hired Project Planning and Workflow Manager (PPWM) to advertise the project. The board heard results from the most recent water quality tests. The board also set a date for a public hearing on its budget. The meeting ended with an executive session. The EPCRLWA was formed in November 2022 by an Intergovernmental Agreement between Cherokee Metropolitan District (CMD), Donala Water and Sanitation District (DWSD), the Town of Monument (TOM), and Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) to build infrastructure that would allow water, including treated effluent, that is flowing south in Monument and Fountain Creeks to be stored at Calhan Reservoir at Woodmoor Ranch and then pumped back north to be used by customers of the participating districts.
Letter of interest to be drafted
John Kuosman, a water practice leader with Merrick and Co., recently hired by EPCRLWA to serve as the project's PPWM, told the board he saw lots of interest in the project on the part of consultants, contractors, and engineers who might be interested in providing services to the project as it moves forward. In previous meetings, the board decided to outsource as many

tasks as possible to keep the number of staff members low as a way of reducing costs. Kuosman said he was drafting a letter of interest that service providers would use to demonstrate their interest in the project. The regulations governing the use of American Recovery Plan Act funds allow EPCRLWA to pre-approve contractors so that they can be deployed quickly when needed. Kuosman said he planned to circulate the letter by email through his contacts in the industry and to post it on Bidnet, an online service that advertises government projects. The board did not vote, but approved Kuosman's plans to advertise the project.
Water quality tests proceed
Richard Hood, of JVA Inc., the company EPCRLWA has hired to assess water quality and design the water treatment aspects of the project, reported to the board on the latest water quality tests. Hood said a second sample of water from the Chilcott Ditch, which conveys water from Fountain Creek to the Calhan reservoir, was taken on Aug. 8. The testing results were in line with previous tests, Hood said, noting pH measurements were a little higher in the newer sample. Hood said Total Organic Carbon was relatively high compared to previous samples and Total Dissolved Solids were lower. The "forever chemicals" PFOA and PFOS, which have maximum contaminant levels of

four parts per trillion, were both above that level at 12 and 17 parts per trillion respectively. Hood said the Chilcott Ditch was due to be turned off for the year in October and he planned to take one more set of water samples from it before that time to check for seasonal variations.
Budget hearing set
The board scheduled a public hearing on its budget for Nov. 16.
Executive session
The board adjourned the regular meeting and went into executive session to receive legal advice regarding items that are subject to negotiations. No action was taken following the executive session.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Oct. 19 at 9 a.m. Regular meetings are usually held on the third Thursday of each month at 9 a.m. at the Monument Town Hall at 645 Beacon Lite Road. Workshop meetings are held the first Thursday of each month at 9 a.m. at the Cherokee Metropolitan District offices at 6250 Palmer Park Blvd., Colorado Springs. Please see loopwater.org or call 719-488-3603 to verify meeting times and locations. James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me.

NEPCO, Sept. 9

Monument Fire Department, Planning Commission visit NEPCO

By Marlene Brown
The Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO) general membership heard presentations on Sept. 9 by staff members of the Town of Monument Planning Commission (MPC) and Monument Fire District (MFD) Chief Andy Kovacs and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) Mark Gunderman.
Gunderman and Kovacs explain timeline for fire district merger
Gunderman and Kovacs said the legal untangling of the merger of MFD and DWFPD should take another six months to a year to complete. DWFPD created the Northern Subdistrict and, should the ballot issue pass in the November's election, the subdistrict will be dissolved and the two districts will merge into one fire district. Please see more information on November's ballot issues 6A and 6B on MFD's website at https://www.monumentfire.org/_files/ugd/799ff1_16524d0042504539b024b6d9caf8f1ff.pdf.
Planning Commission presentation
Two MPC staff members, Rey Medina and Jeff Li-

jegren, spoke to the membership on planning and land development. What are MPC's duties? The process of the Planning Commission is identifying, evaluating, and acting upon land use alternatives and public requests. Community involvement is essential. What is land use planning? It includes community goals, guiding documents, master plans, and visionary goals. Current planning includes zoning maps and regulations, subdivision regulations, development review, subdivision design standards, and enforcement. The MPC looks for citizen participation, asking questions and offering solutions. The applicant needs to learn regulations and processes and communicate issues and concerns. The staff offers technical guidance, provides the information, researches applications, and then reports to the public. Land use decisions made by the MPC include community goals and growth management. Land lots can include residential, single-family detached and residential attached, mixed use, commercial, light industrial, and parks and open space. The development review process includes annexation, plat, zoning, site plan, construction documents and building permits.

Recently, the Town of Monument (TOM) received a request for a public meeting regarding the possible annexation of Gleneagle into the TOM. A public meeting was held Aug. 29 and after a question-and-answer session and discussion with the TOM officials, it was noted this meeting was strictly preliminary and any annexation would require 51% of voter approval. The majority of the residents at the meeting were opposed to the annexation. The TOM said it would not pursue any further action. See TOM article on page 12. NEPCO has requested member HOAs in the area to join NEPCO's Land Use Committee. No experience is needed and training and guidance would be provided. Please contact retiring Land Use Chair Bob Mooney at bobmooney01@msn.com or any board member at boardposition@nepco.org.

NEPCO normally meets at the Woodmoor Barn every other month on the second Saturday. The next regular member meeting will be on Nov. 11, 10 a.m. to noon. For more information, go to nepco.org. Marlene Brown can be reached at marlenebrown@ocn.me.

Woodmoor Improvement Association, Sept. 27

Board hears concerns about development next to common area

By Jackie Burhans
At its September meeting, the Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) board heard from residents concerned about a developer's impact on drainage near one of its common areas. Board directors provided reports on their areas of responsibility.
Residents voice concern about development and drainage
The WIA board heard from residents concerned about a home being built on Four Winds Way next to the common area known as The Point. According to the WIA website at <https://woodmoor.org/common-areas/>, The Point is one of the smaller common areas and is surrounded by private property, except for the access point on Four Winds Way. One resident, who had been exchanging emails with WIA, noted that development had been ongoing for 2½ years, and the home was almost complete except for water and sewage lines. He requested three things: an approved drainage plan, vetted with ingress/egress to the common area, and a list of all concerns, issues, and complaints against the builder. The resident said he felt an obligation to make these issues known. He was concerned about safety, saying that a dump truck and a cement truck had gone off the driveway in good weather. He said he'd had to call the builder about silt fences and dump trucks delivering dirt after midnight without watering down the driveway. The driveway is huge, he said, with a parking lot at the bottom exceeding the approved width of 15 feet and impinging on the common area. He cited the lack of property markers, making pushing the dirt into the right location impossible. If we get a major rain, he said, it will clog up the ditch, soak into the ground, and mess with the water table. He did say that the homeowner was great to work with, and his complaints were with the builder. Board President Brian Bush said that the WIA board members are volunteers with limited authority. If Pikes Peak Regional Building Department (PPRBD) approves a plan, it will come out and inspect it, he said, suggesting asking a supervisor to come out early to confirm the builder is following the plan. Bush said WIA could provide general information about previous complaints but had no ability to ban builders, though it could let PPRBD know of its concerns. Bush noted that he had personally approved a one-time off-hours delivery of dirt by the contrac-

tor working on the Highway 105 project, given the challenges that the project is facing with traffic. He encouraged the resident to call Woodmoor Public Safety (WPS) if trucks show up from now on during off hours. Bush said that WIA's common area would not be infringed upon at the end of the day, though he expected things could get chaotic during construction. He noted that Steve Cutler, director of common areas, and Bob Pearsall, common areas administrator, were the contacts for any concerns or suggestions about common area changes. Another neighboring resident reported that her basement had flooded twice due to the creation of the driveway, with the dirt from the drainage clogging her sump pump. The property owner has been open about what they can do to reconcile that damage, she said, but she would be following up with PPRBD about the drainage issue.
Board reports
• Bush provided the treasurer report in the absence of Connie Brown, saying that expenses are at 66% of the budget and revenue was down from homeowners' association (HOA) check fees, but substantially up from interest income after moving money to higher performing instruments. WIA expects administrative fee revenue from the Cloverleaf development, which he recommends go into reserve funds for 2024 on a one-time basis. HOA administrator Denise Cagliariro is developing the 2024 budget, which will be presented in November to the board for approval. He said it was too early to tell if WIA would have a surplus.
• Covenants Director Per Suhr reminded residents that trash cans must be stowed out of site on the same day as pickup, tall grass and weeds need to be cut, and trailers and RVs cannot be on lots for more than 72 hours without a variance. Residents who are out of compliance may be issued notices. Bush commended Covenants Administrator Justin Gates and Pearsall for achieving a higher degree of compliance than in the past.
• Public Safety Director Brad Gleason asked residents to be extra careful when driving due to earlier sunsets, school being in session, and extensive construction. Bush shared that residents should be careful not to hit the orange road di-

viders in construction zones.
• Architectural Control Director Ed Miller said WIA has had 401 projects submitted year to date, which is down only 11% from last year's 451 projects. The increase in projects so far this year has primarily been roof work due to recent hail storms.
• Gates, who also serves as Forestry administrator, said there is only \$30,000 left in the Wild-fire Mitigation Grant, which he wants to spend quickly so he can apply for additional funds. He also said that now is a perfect time to look for mountain pine beetles (MPB) and to have them removed. For more information on having your lot evaluated for MPB, see <https://woodmoor.org/forestry-firewise/>.
• Common Areas Director Steve Cutler reported that the sprinkler system around The Barn would be shut down by the second week of October, common area fire mitigation is ongoing, and trail and common area maintenance during October would see the removal of grass from the trail base.
• Pearsall reported working with a prototype computer, loading and testing all the software he uses. Once his computer is working, the new computers can be rolled out to other staff members.

The WIA Board of Directors usually meets at 7 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month in the Barn at 1691 Woodmoor Drive, Monument. The next meeting will be on Oct. 25. The WIA calendar can be found at www.woodmoor.org/wia-calendar/. WIA board meeting minutes can be found at www.woodmoor.org/meeting-minutes/ once approved and posted. Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

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Our Community.
Shop Tri-Lakes
and Black Forest!

September Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

Temperatures were above normal most of September, only interrupted by a wet and cold period during the middle of the month. Precipitation ended right about normal, but it all occurred during a four-day period.

The first week of the month was well above normal with high reaching the upper 80s on the 1st and 2nd, then mid-80s on the 3rd and 4th. Skies were clear to mostly clear with afternoon clouds building.

Temperatures cooled back to normal over the next few days with continued mostly sunny skies. Highs were in the mid-70s to mid-80s from the 5th through the 9th. The weather pattern changed on the 10th with a frontal passage late that morning. This brought with it high levels of moisture. Clouds built in and showers and thunderstorms developed during the afternoon and evening. Cloudy and wet conditions continued into the next day with areas of fog and rain off and on all day. During the period, 1-2 inches of rainfall accumulated in the region. Temperatures were cool as well, with highs in the 50s and 60s. During this time, the first snowfall of the season occurred in the mountains, with several inches accumulating above tree line, a sign of things to come.

Unsettled conditions continued to affect the area over the next couple of days. This included cool temperatures, clouds, more rainfall, and mountain snow. Our coldest day of the month occurred on the 15th,

with highs barely reaching 50F and lows in the mid- to upper 30s on the 15th and 16th. The chilly temperatures and clear skies on the morning of the 16th also resulted in the first frost of the season for many of us.

However, after this brief wet and cool period, quiet conditions again moved in. The remainder of the month was right around normal with highs consistently in the mid- to upper 70s and lows in the 40s. Except for the 19th and 20th, every day was dry as well. Even these two days only had brief sprinkles, barely enough to wet the pavement. The coolest day during the period from the 16th through the 30th was the 23rd, when highs held in the upper 60s and the low again touched the upper 30s. The warmest time during this period was the last few days of the month when we were in the upper 70s to low 80s.

A look ahead

October can be an active weather month for the region with our first snowy conditions often experienced. Most years, we seem to get a good snowfall around Halloween, and after a warm and dry September, we could use a wet and cold storm this year. Snow can be heavy at times during any part of October as when over 20 inches of snow fell on Oct. 9-10 in 2005, and 2006 saw over 24 inches of snow fall in less than 24 hours on Oct. 26.

Of course, the big storm some of us remember occurred during October 1997, when nearly 4 feet of

snow and blizzard conditions shut everything down for several days. But we are just as likely to get mild and sunny conditions, so enjoy those sunny days when you can. This fall and winter we are expected to enter an El Niño pattern. If the other teleconnections are supportive, this would normally result in above normal snowfall for the winter and spring, so let's hope for that.

September 2023 Weather Statistics

Average High	74.6° (+3.7)
100-year return frequency value max	77.5° min 63.5°
Average Low	44.8° (+3.6)
100-year return frequency value max	46.7° min 36.1°
Monthly Precipitation	1.67" (-0.13")
100-year return frequency value max	4.34" min 0.40"
Monthly Snowfall	0.0" (-0.4")
Highest Temperature	89° on the 1st
Lowest Temperature	34° on the 16th
Season to Date Snow	0.0" (-0.4")
	(100% below normal)
	(the snow season is from July 1 to June 30)
Season to Date Precip.	23.85" (+4.08")
	(20% above normal)
	(the precip season is from (Jan 1 to Dec 31)
Heating Degree Days	182 (-153)
Cooling Degree Days	23 (+0)

Bill Kappel is a meteorologist and Tri-Lakes resident. He can be reached at billkappel@ocn.me.

Letters to Our Community

Guidelines for letters are on page 27.

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 are arranged in alphabetical order based on the last name of the author.

Tom Olmstead—strong candidate for D38 school board

Tom Olmstead is an honest, open, and refreshing candidate for D38. Tom puts parents and students first and his refreshing candor about personally meeting parents in the district brings back much needed trust in our system. There are some haters in our community trying to lie about Tom. He's had a stellar career as former LAPD, FBI, and lawyer and he wants a school environment where everyone is safe and accepted.

Tom and his wife moved to Monument to be closer to their children and grandchildren who attend D38. He brings a perspective of wisdom and strong family values along with the strength and fortitude to stand up to whatever ideology might threaten those values.

We believe Tom Olmstead will be a blessing to our community and we will be voting for him.

Hilary Brendemuhl
Bill Brendemuhl

D38 School Board director, District 2 election

Patti Shank Ph.D. is an exceptional candidate for the District 2 director of the Lewis-Palmer School District Board of Education.

Her experience in learning and instructional design enables her to truly understand the challenges facing our teachers and students. Her attention to detail allows her to easily identify and collaboratively resolve unintended consequences of proposed programs.

Patti has a deep commitment to bettering our community by advocating for positive student outcomes. As an alumni, resident, parent, and teacher in the Lewis-Palmer School District, I wholeheartedly support and look forward to working with Patti as the new District 2 director of our Board of Education.

Please join me in voting for Patti Shank.

Jennifer Coopman

Kindness is alive in Monument

I have a collection of buttons and pins. One of the buttons says "Try a Little Kindness," which I believe referred to a hair product many years ago. Recently, during a visit to my local barber shop for a "cut" I was told that a gentleman who just left had paid for my haircut. I asked the man's name and was told "Zander." I do not know anyone by that name, but I sure do wish to say "Thanks for the kindness!"

John Howe

Thanks, Kiwanis Monument Hill Foundation!

Thank you to the Kiwanis Monument Hill Foundation for granting the money to purchase upgraded teacher access for Gimkit and Quizizz, two online educational review programs. Both Gimkit and Quizizz are online educational quiz-like game platforms that get students excited about practicing math problems in a competitive but no-pressure environment. I am so grateful to have the Monument Hill Foundation's support. Having an upgraded teacher account allows access to all kinds of math games for practice and enrichment. Additionally, it allows more flexibility in differentiating the content to reach all students at various academic levels, as well as aligning the content to our state standards. Students love it when we get to play the games in GimKit and Quizizz! My students love it when we use them in class! Thank you so much to the Monument Hill Foundation for your support!

Molly Ketchell
Lewis-Palmer High School Math Teacher

Upcoming D38 school board election

The D38 school board election is coming up this November. I would like to personally recommend Patti Shank Ph.D. as a school board candidate for D38.

Patti has the dedication, ability, commitment, desire, and qualifications to be an excellent school board director. She is also committed to our community and

wants to give back and help our kids have the tools needed to be productive and successful.

Her entire working life has been centered around creating better methods of learning and retaining relevant knowledge. She obtained her Ph.D. in educational technologies to further her contribution to her field. She has written several books on the subject of learning, as well as many published articles.

She has been a featured speaker to audiences all over the world in learning technologies and is very well respected in her field. A quick online search will show you how well respected she is.

How do I know this? She is my wife and life partner and I see her dedication to learning sciences.

What you see is what you get with Patti. She won't make this political, unlike her opponent. She is research based, but also has a strong value system and is steadfast in her core beliefs. She will be a valued partner to the other school board members and a great choice for D38.

Please vote for Patti Shank. www.patti4d38.com

Thank you.

Steve King

Vote for Tom Olmstead

I'm writing in support of candidate Tom Olmstead for D38 School Board. I had the opportunity to hear Mr. Olmstead at the Candidate Forum conducted by KOAA on Sept. 28. I found him to be clear and committed to the parents, students, and staff of D38. His openness to hear ideas from everyone to make D38 a great place to receive a 21st century education, while honoring the family values that make Monument a wonderful place to live, encourages me.

Mr. Olmstead moved to Monument to be near his grandchildren, all Monument Academy graduates. Two granddaughters are currently attending Palmer Ridge High School. He clearly has a vested interest in ensuring we continue to support our longstanding tradition of excellence in education.

Mr. Olmstead's lifelong dedication to "serve and protect"—first as an Army veteran and then as a police officer—has prepared him well for public service.

I will encourage my friends and neighbors to vote for Mr. Olmstead on Nov. 7.

Ana Cecilia Konduris

Vote Patti Shank for D38 School Board

When considering positions on a School Board, background, character, education, and stances of the candidate should be considered as a whole. If one element is missing, look for another, more qualified candidate who aligns with the aggregate.

Patti Shank is a widely cited author on the science of learning and has over 20 years in higher education—her background is exemplary. Patti is open and honest and harbors no secret political interest; she is 100% for the needs of students—her character is beyond reproach. Patti's education speaks for itself with a Ph.D. in Education, what better qualification for a School Board? Her education is flawless. And finally, Patti has a genuine affection for Monument and, most especially, for the students of D38. Truly, Patti encompasses all the ingredients for a stellar School Board member.

Let's ensure that D38 has the most qualified School Board by voting for Patti Shank.

Laura Kronick

D38 elections—know who you're voting for

I am writing to express my concerns about Tom Olmstead as a candidate for the Lewis-Palmer School Dis-

trict (D38) Board of Education, District 2 director.

Based on my research, I believe that Tom's track record and positions are not aligned with the best interests of our community.

Tom's lack of experience in education and unfamiliarity with the challenges faced by our teachers and students are a significant concern. It is crucial to have a board member who understands the intricacies of our education system and can make informed decisions that positively impact our students.

Furthermore, Tom's past actions have raised questions about his commitment to transparency and accountability. As community members, we deserve a board member who is open and honest with us, and who will prioritize the needs of our students over personal or political interests. Because he has chosen to align himself with others in our community that clearly have an agenda against the town and school districts in general, we will never really know who is speaking; Tom or those pulling his strings.

In addition, Tom has no experience on critical issues such as curriculum development and student support services. We need a board member who will advocate for a well-rounded education that prepares our students for success in an ever-changing world.

Given these concerns, I cannot endorse Tom Olmstead for the Lewis-Palmer School District, Board of Education, District 2 director. I believe that we need an experienced candidate who is committed to the success and well-being of all students in our district.

Vote Patti Shank for District 2 director, Lewis-Palmer School District Board of Education.

Mitch LaKind

Ethics Commission takes up complaint against mayor as "non-frivolous."

In May 2023, I wrote a letter to OCN stating that Monument taxpayers were going to pick up the tab for Mayor Mitch LaKind's personal attorney fees to the tune of \$21,000 under the guise that it was "in the Town's interest." That "interest" was actually an inappropriate sexual comment LaKind made to a female trustee—discovered in the December investigation of illegal electioneering by current Town Council members. LaKind hired and announced at a taped trustee meeting that this was his personal attorney.

I argued in May that the taxpayers should never be paying for an elected official's legal counsel for inappropriate behavior. Apparently, on Aug. 15 the Colorado Ethics Commission agreed with me. In a unanimous vote, the Ethics Commission said the complaint is "non-frivolous" and will take up the ethics complaint.

By having his cronies vote with him to pawn his legal fees onto the Monument taxpayers, the mayor personally benefitted from the vote. When the mayor's Town Council colleagues vote to relieve his personal debt because they all ran for office together, each of those colleagues now "own" the mayor and to some degree, his vote. He is forever compromised—no matter how he blathers on that he's "passionate" about Monument or any purposeful misinformation the council gives you.

Whether you look like Stormy Daniels, Lizzo, or Twiggy, sexually inappropriate comments to any woman is a bad idea. What the mayor should be passionate about is holding his tongue when inclined to offer sexual harassing remarks and repay the taxpayers for the offense.

A link to the Ethics Commission complaint: [Complaint 23-17.pdf \(colorado.gov\)](#)

Amy Stephens

Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

Wonders of our universe

By the staff at Covered Treasures

"Earth is a very small stage in the vast cosmic arena."—Carl Sagan

In celebration of the upcoming solar eclipse in October, here is a list of books that provide information on planets, planetary travel, stars, eclipses, and much more.

Packing for Mars: The Curious Science for Life in the Void

By Mary Roach (Norton Company) \$16.95

This book explores the strange universe of space travel and life without gravity. Mary Roach gives readers a closeup

of the challenges of training for living in space and the reality of living on the Space Shuttle.

Packing for Mars for Kids
By Mary Roach (Norton Young Readers) \$9.95
This lighthearted book asks the type of questions that children would ask in a comprehensive guide for the strange, gross, and awe-inspiring realm of space travel and life without gravity. From flying on NASA's weightless wonder and eating a sloppy joe from a tube to learning how to use shuttle toilets, this book is chock-full of thorough research and firsthand experiences.

The Sky Is Not the Limit
By Jeremie Decalf (Eerdmans Books for Young Readers) \$18.99
A poetic odyssey through space with the groundbreaking Voyager 2 probe past Earth into deep space and beyond. Voyager 2 has viewed Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune and continued past the boundaries of our solar system. This lyrical, atmospheric book introduces young readers to the pioneering NASA spacecraft that has spent over 45 years observing and exploring our galaxy.

Totality! An Eclipse Guide in Rhyme & Science
By Jeffrey Bennett (Big Kid Science) \$19.99
This book features a unique combination of rhyme

and science, suitable for a wide range of ages. The engaging rhyme, with a couplet on each page, has been constructed to serve as a mnemonic device for underlying science, which is further explained through beautiful illustrations and "Big Kid Box" sidebars. This book concludes with a glossary, suggested activities, an eclipse science summary, features that will add value for parents and teachers learning along with their kids or students. Printed books come with two pairs of eclipse viewing glasses, which provide a great way to view the sun at any time, especially during a solar eclipse.

The Moon Tonight: Our Moon's Journey Around Earth
By Jung Chang-hoon (Blue Dot Kids Press) \$18.99
Through the eyes of this father-daughter duo, this book explores the science behind the moon's phases and the 29½-day lunar cycle. There are easy-to-follow scientific explanations of the first- and last-quarter moons, ebb and flow tides, where the new moon goes, and more.

Sun Moon Earth: The History of Solar Eclipses from Omens of Doom to Einstein and Exoplanets
By Tyler Nordgren (Basic Books) \$30
In Sun Moon Earth, astronomer Tyler Nordgren illustrates how this most seemingly unnatural of natural phenomena was transformed from a fearsome omen

to a tourist attraction. This book takes us around the world to show how different cultures interpreted these dramatic events.

The Last Stargazers; The Enduring Story of Astronomy's Vanishing Explorers
By Emily Levesque (Sourcebooks) \$18.99
Levesque takes readers inside the most powerful telescopes in the world and introduces the people who run them. She also explores the future of one of the most ancient and inspiring scientific disciplines as we gain the ability to see farther beyond our planet than ever before while relying increasingly on code and computers to study the stars. Stay up to date with the latest scientific breakthroughs and advancements in the field of astronomy.

The Astronauts Guide to Leaving the Planet: Everything You Need to Know from Training to Re-Entry
By Terry Virts (Workman Publishing) \$14.99
A former astronaut inspires the next generation of space travelers with answers to kids' questions on how people become astronauts, how they prepare for space travel, and what it's like to live and work in space.

Until next month, happy reading.
The staff at Covered Treasures can be reached at books@ocn.me.

October Library Events

New programs for Teens and Tweens; Culture Pass for Pikes Peak Highway

By Harriet Halbig
This October the library will host several seasonal activities for teens and tweens.
On Oct. 13 from 2:30 to 5:30 there will be a Teen Spooky Movie Marathon with titles to be chosen by the teens in attendance (ages 13 to 18). Registration is not required.
On Oct. 16 from 4:30 to 5:30 tweens (ages 9-12) are invited to bring a favorite spooky story to share.

Complete your experience by making s'mores and a fun memento to take home.
There is a new tween Dungeons and Dragons Club meeting once a month at the Monument Library. The next meeting will be on Nov. 3 from 4 to 5:30. Registration is preferred but not required. All are welcome to join and no experience is required.
From now until April 30, 2024, cardholders can get free access to the Pikes Peak Highway through the

district's Culture Pass program. The pass will admit two adults and two children. For more information and to get your pass, please go to ppld.org/culture pass. Passes are also available to many local museums and the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Monument Library has recently added a new playhouse in the children's area. Come and see!
Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me

High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

Gardening with cinnamon; fall tool care

By Janet Sellers
"It's amazing how many worries are lost while gardening."—"The Empress of Dirt"
Cinnamon is good for people and gardens
I've used cinnamon for flower pots and veggie beds to keep out critters with success, but I recently learned about the wide range of how it helps gardening. Cinnamon has gotten more expensive recently, so I have also used pepper flakes and cayenne powder instead—which started with trying to keep our kitten off the Christmas tree branches. It worked great for that.
Cinnamon protects soil and plants from fungi, rot, and more. It deters houseflies, aphids, moths, ants, and spiders even from our closets. I put cinnamon oil or powder on pine cones in a dish or on a shelf—even on a ribbon to dangle by the door. Cornell University cooperative extension reports pesticidal uses include insecticide and acaricide. Repellent of cockroaches, mosquitoes, dogs, and cats. Nematicide

for plant parasitic nematodes. Fungicide for disease control in edible mushrooms and more.
The website www.realmisolliesoakland.com/ reports, "... Cinnamon has lots of eugenol, a popular insect-repellent ingredient. The spicy heat and strong aroma of cinnamon can also disrupt insect pheromones, separating them from their fellow bugs and disrupting communication." It is very good for human food since it has iron, calcium, fiber, various vitamins, and manganese. It also contains carbs, fats, lipids, and proteins.
Tool care in fall in our high desert climate
The Empress of Dirt website (a fun favorite of mine) offers advice for good fall routines: Paint the ends of tools bright colors, rinse off tools in diluted household bleach (4 teaspoons bleach for quart of water) for one minute and then dry well.
Kevin at the Epic Gardening website has rusty tool hints: Clean pruners in a white vinegar bath. Just

put the tool in a jar that fits the tool head, add vinegar up past the rust area, and next day the rust is in the vinegar. Then tackle the rest with a kitchen scrub pad and get all the rust and crud off. Then lube and protect with 3-in-1 oil. I clean my hands with Dawn dish soap, but many use Lava soap which has scrubbing pumice in it.
Wooden handles: Sand and protect with boiled linseed oil. Protect moving parts with 3-in-1 oil or WD-40 (check with the manufacturer's instructions). I use a sponge sander for the handles. I spray WD-40 on cutting tools and use folded 400 grit sandpaper in a back-and-forth motion to sharpen tools. (I dip things like shovels in a bucket of sand to clean them off, and the sand also seems to help the edges). Many people take their tools to a pro for this.
Janet Sellers is an avid "lazy" gardener, letting Nature lead the way for fun kid- and pet-safe gardening. Contact her at JanetSellers@ocn.me.

Art Matters

October is Arts Month



By Janet Sellers
September was the last Art Hop month of the season, but we have more art events coming up for fall. October brings its own art events and fun for the Pikes Peak Region, the annual Arts Month. This year marks the 10th annual event. The theme is "Open Your World with the Arts" and explore the strength and vitality of our arts community throughout El Paso and Teller counties.
This annual event is the brainchild of COPP'R, the Cultural Office of the Pikes Peak Region created to build cultural promotion and cultural tourism. "The Cultural Office increases cultural participation among local residents and tourists, connects our arts community with peers in the tourism and media industries, and ultimately works to build our area as a regional, national, and international arts destination," according to the office. Besides art to see and

buy in our Pikes Peak region, the office is cooking up a Creative Stays program to attract cultural tourists to the region. This will offer a new way to explore and discover the wonderful attractions and amenities our region has to offer.
Palmer Lake Art Group Small Works Show
Palmer Lake Art Group (PLAG) has its third annual Small Works Show this year at Bella Art and Frame Gallery (250 Front St., Monument) Oct. 6 through Nov. 24. It's a member show with small artworks just in time for holiday gifting. Throughout the show, artists will replace each sold piece with a new one, so the work on view will be changing throughout the Small Works Show.
Artist Sunday
This special event is always the Sunday after Thanksgiving—mark your calendar! It seems the Thanksgiv-

ing weekend is the holiday kickoff for shopping, and artists are joining the fun by having their own national day offering truly personal and unique gifts. "A gift of art is a gift of feeling."
Artist Sunday includes 500-plus art organizations and economic development agencies across the country promoting and championing artists in their communities. Participating organizations include local arts agencies, state agencies, counties, chambers of commerce, national organizations, associations, municipalities, and community groups nationwide. View the Partner Directory for local partners: <https://artistssunday.com/locations/>.
Janet Sellers is an artist, writer, and speaker, sharing her works locally and across the country. Contact her at JanetSellers@ocn.me.

Snapshots of Our Community

Fox Run Park trail work

Right: Volunteers from the Friends of Fox Run Park worked on the trails in Fox Run Regional Park in August and September. After over 60 days of rain in the area, the trails were heavily damaged. Thanks to the El Paso County Parks Department providing the gravel and road base, several volunteers worked to build water bars and fill some of the ruts caused by the rains. Pictured are, from left, Katie Lenger, Barb Heidmous, and Albert Koscielnny. For more information on volunteering, email friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com.
Photo by Marlene Brown.



Bye Bye Summer!



Above: There were plenty of ways area residents could say goodbye to summer on Labor Day, Sept. 4. Monument Lake was full of boaters, paddle boarders, parasailers, sunbathers, and anglers. *Photo by Michael Weinfeld.*

Gleneagle Sertoma raises \$40,000



Above: Gleneagle Sertoma’s 22nd annual Patriot Golf Benefit Tournament raised over \$40,000 on Aug. 23 at the Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs. The money will help local law enforcement and military assistance programs. The event started as a way to honor the first responders who died on 9/11. The tournament began when 126 golfers left the clubhouse in a procession of flag-decked golf carts. In photo, a banner pays tribute to the fallen officers whose families have received significant contributions from past tournaments’ proceeds. *Photo courtesy of Gleneagle Sertoma Club.*

Burkart/Raper wedding, Sept. 16



Above: *Our Community News* volunteer Audrey Burkart married Ryan Raper in front of more than 100 people in Colorado Springs on Sept. 16. It was a costume wedding with an adventure theme. Burkart and Raper wore purple outfits made by her mother to go for a “regal look.” Burkart embroidered them herself. The couple met online 3½ years ago. Raper proposed on New Year’s Eve 2022. After the ceremony, Burkart and Raper went on a 15-day honeymoon in Venice, the Dolomite mountains in Italy, and then a cruise from Venice to Croatia, Montenegro, and Greece. *Caption by Michael Weinfeld. Photo courtesy of Audrey Burkart.*

Bines and Brews, Sept. 16



Left: OCN volunteer Chris Jeub and his son enjoy beer samples Sept. 16 at the annual Bines and Brews Beer Fest in Monument, organized by the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce. Twenty breweries and several vendors joined in the fun. *Photo by Chris Jeub.*

Acoustic Eidolon at TLCA, Sept. 16

Right: Acoustic Eidolon, composed of husband and wife Joe Scott and Hannah Alkire, returned to the Tri-Lakes Center of the Arts (TLCA) on Sept. 16. With Scott on a double-neck guitjo and Alkire on cello, they once again proved why they are one the favorite annual performers at the TLCA, having performed there over a dozen times. The breadth of their musical talents was demonstrated



in the diversity of their two-set performance. Their sets included Sounds of Silence by Simon and Garfunkel, Queen’s Bohemian Rhapsody, the Celtic-influenced Stonehaven, A Tree Finds Its Voice, an ode to the tree that provided the wood for two of their instruments, and Remembering the Sun, the title track from Alkire’s 2020 solo release with songs influenced by her trips to the Faroe Islands, Alaska, and Europe. *Photo by David Futey.*

Last 2023 Art Hop, Sept. 21

Right: On Sept. 21, poets Janet Sellers, left, and Mary Barrett Brown read from their poetry books at the season’s ultimate Art Hop event at Bella Art and Frame gallery. Amid the festive atmosphere, the poets read their works each hour, complete with large onscreen images personally created by the artist-poets. Brown read from her book, *The Book of Divine Love*, her published book of heart-opening poems of love and personal connection. Sellers read from her artist’s handmade imagery and haiku book, *Immersion: Haiku Poems* about her memories and adventures of her life near the Pacific Ocean told in short haiku form. *Photo courtesy of Tom Brown.*



Monu-Palooza, Sept. 3



Above: The seventh annual Monu-Palooza, billed as Monument’s Hometown Music Festival, was held during Labor Day weekend on Sept. 3 at Limbach Park. This year’s music lineup included local bands Skin & Bones, Missy & The Dirty Secrets, Mojo Filter, Ashtōnz, WireWood Station, and The Country Music Project from Denver. Monu-Palooza organizer Charlie Searle said, “This has been the best one yet, the weather has cooperated, the bands are terrific, and we have added a street fair and more food trucks and sponsors” for concert-goers to enjoy. Guitarist and singer Billy Flynn of Mojo Filter said Monu-Palooza is “a beautiful event arranged by Charlie and a nice end to the summer season.” *Photo by David Futey.*

American Legion honors 9/11



Left: American Legion Post 9-11 held a solemn ceremony at Monument Fire Department’s Station 1 on the 22nd anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. Flags were raised then lowered to half-staff at the time the first plane hit the World Trade Center in New York. Palmer Ridge High School student Ruby Taylor sang the National Anthem and Post 9-11 Padre Jim Bergeron led the crowd in prayer. Members of the Monument Police and Fire departments and town officials attended the ceremony. From left are Police Chief Patrick Regan, American Legion Post 9-11 historian Ray Kinder, and Monument Fire Chief Andy Kovacs. *Photo by Arleen Kinder.*

Run4Hope, Sept. 16



Above: These children took off like lightning when the Run4Hope started. Run4Hope 5K for Schools is a competitive 5K run and 2-mile color-run run/walk to celebrate hope and healing in our community. There were 500 pounds of colored chalk, games, music, vendors, and a pancake breakfast for the Sept. 16 run. The event, supported by the Ascent church and many sponsors, raises money to support the social and emotional wellness of our youth through various programs in local area schools focusing on suicide prevention—along with mental health awareness and suicide prevention training in El Paso County. As of 2022, the church had raised over \$140,000 in support of these programs, including funding of the Sources of Strength program for D20 and D38 high schools. See <https://run4hope5kforschools.com/> to donate or volunteer for next year. *Photo by Janna Finn.*

Business After Hours, Sept. 19



Above: The Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce held its Business After Hours gathering on Sept. 19 at the Searle Ranch in Monument. This gathering is an opportunity for networking and getting to know more about businesses in our area. Texas Roadhouse provided food. *Photo by Steve Pate.*

Controlled burn, Sept. 25-27



Above: Large plumes of smoke were visible in Monument from the prescribed burns on Sept. 25-27. The U.S. Forest Service and the El Paso County Wild-land Fire Group carried out the three-day controlled burns in Ensign Gulch near Rampart Range Road, and Forest Service Road 314. The burn covered almost 400 acres and is part of an ongoing effort to reduce forest fire fuel in the area. *Caption by Natalie Barszcz. Photo by Michael Weinfeld.*

Zettlemoyer earns Gold Award



Above: Colorado Springs Girl Scout Jillian Zettlemoyer, 18, (in photo) built a sandbox for the new Trinity Community Park in Monument. Zettlemoyer spent about eight months planning and building the project to earn the Scouts' Gold Award. Fewer than 6 percent of Girl Scouts earn that award. She got help from her parents and some Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps cadets. The playground is fully compliant with the American With Disabilities Act. It's located behind Trinity Lutheran Church at 17750 Knollwood Drive. *Photo by Tamara Schwarz.*

Chapin honored

Right: Tri-Lakes Cares Executive Director Haley Chapin has been selected as one of four honorees for the Colorado Health Foundation's Nonprofit Sabbatical Program. The program awards Colorado nonprofit executives with a three- to four-month sabbatical while offering charitable funding to help strengthen the organizations they lead. Chapin will take sabbatical various times next year. Director of Operations Julie Keim will take over for Chapin when she's gone. *Photo courtesy of Tri-Lakes Cares.*



Teens learn preparedness



Above: The emergency preparedness club at Palmer Ridge High School tested solar oven cooking as an alternative energy source to use when there is no power, either after a blizzard or when going camping. In this demonstration, the club baked banana muffins in a commercial solar oven (successfully) and hard-cooked eggs in a solar oven made out of a reflective car window shade (which would have been successful with another hour of cooking). Lessons learned: You can't rush it when doing solar cooking, and it only works when the sun is shining and it's not too windy. Coming up this year, the club members will do hands-on learning about first aid, car emergencies, wildfires, and lots more, with the support of sponsor Eric Wall. *Caption by Lisa Hatfield. Photo by Gayle Humm.*

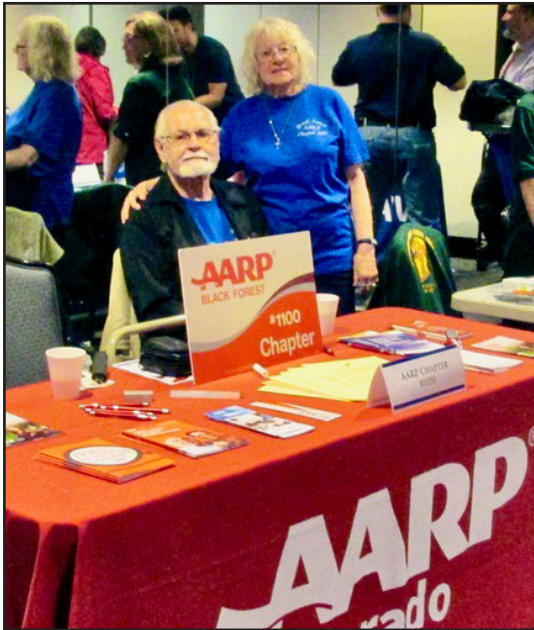
Presentation at the Senior Center



Above: Nearly 20 people attended a talk about Monument Cemetery at the Silver Key at Tri-Lakes Senior Center on Sept. 26. The presentation by Monument residents Michael Weinfeld and John Howe included almost 50 photos of the local cemetery as well as cemeteries in Denver and Silverton, Colo., Taos, N.M., and Bridgeport, Conn. The audience heard about the history of the cemeteries and how Weinfeld and Howe updated the cemetery files in Monument Town Hall. Howe worked on the project for 13 years and Weinfeld for five years. *Photos by Tia M. Mayer.*

Military retirees, spouses honored

Right: Chapter 1100 of AARP in Black Forest was one of 55 groups that took part in Military Retiree and Spouse Appreciation Day at Petersen Air Force Base on Sept. 23. This was the first time in five years the event was held because of restrictions during the pandemic. Perhaps because of that, this year's attendance was bigger than usual. Those in attendance represented community service and military retirement groups from all branches of the Armed Forces as well as insurance, medical, banking, and other groups. A military brass quintet serenaded the large turnout. *Photo by Stan Beckner.*



Super Blue Moon



Above: A super blue moon rose above a high school soccer match at Don Breese Stadium on Aug. 30. A blue moon isn't actually blue. It just refers to the fact that it was the second full moon in the same month. The phenomenon is so rare, it's the source of the phrase "once in a blue moon." The next super blue moon won't rise until January 2037. The celestial event wasn't a lucky one for Palmer Ridge High School. The Bears were shut out by Coronado 2-0. *Photo by Michael Weinfeld.*

Our Community Notices

By Janet Sellers
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. Please notify us if your event listing needs to be updated.

Community volunteers

Many students need volunteer hours for scouting, civics classes, or other clubs volunteering hours. Friends of Fox Run Park will have some openings for student volunteers (and grownups, too) most of the year. Friends of Fox Run Park has openings for volunteers for various tasks. Besides tasks, the group offers information and skills demonstration for each 2-3 hour session, and celebrates volunteers at the park with the annual community holiday cheer/ ornament party in December. The Tri Lakes Cares on-site Garden in Monument needs volunteers in Fall, Spring and Summer. Gardening tasks include preparing garden beds, weeding, sowing seeds, and developing the compost. Bring gardening gloves, some tools will be provided on the workdays. Contact Janet Sellers at JanetSellers@ocn.me or Marlene Brown at MarleneBrown@ocn.me for more information.

MVEA outage notifications

Please add your phone number to your MVEA account to streamline outage reporting and restoration notifications. To report an outage please call or text "OUT"

to (800) 388-9881. Visit MVEA's Outage Center before the storm. There is information about preparing for outages, electrical safety, outage reporting, a link to the outage map, and more.

Trail repair volunteers needed

Friends of Monument Preserve (FOMP) needs volunteers to help repair the trails in the National Forest Open Space surrounding the Monument Fire Center. The Forest Service recently completed the second phase of Fire Mitigation work and many of the social trails have been damaged. The Forest Service relies on FOMP to maintain these trails. Trail Repair workdays are scheduled on the second Tuesday of the month from April-October. Next meeting: Tue., **Sep. 9**, 5 pm. Meet at the Mt. Herman trailhead off Mt. Herman Rd and Nursery Rd and bring gloves. Tools will be provided.

Get Help in Larkspur

Larkspur Church has a Food Bank and Care Center that offer a good variety of non-perishable food items, as well as clothing for men, women, and children, some household items available too. We're here to help. If you are in need, or know someone who is, please reach out to Jeff at gethelp@larkspur.church. If you would like to donate contact Jeff by the same email to arrange a pick up.

The Sunflower is for people with non-visible disabilities
Watch for green and yellow sunflower lanyards, bracelets, and ribbons, discreet

ways to make the invisible visible. Wearing the Sunflower discreetly indicates to people around the wearer including staff, colleagues and health professionals that they need additional support, help or a little more time. However big or small, your help moves us closer to a society where people recognize that an offer of help, understanding and kindness can make a huge difference to the daily experiences that a Sunflower wearer has. For more information: www.flydenver.com/accessibility, www.hdsunflower.com/us/, and www.disabled-world.com/disability/types/invisible/.

Tri-Lakes Cares needs your support

Tri-Lakes Cares is the only food pantry and human services organization serving northern El Paso County through emergency relief and self-sufficiency 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 donate. Visit <https://tri-lakescares.org/donate> to learn how to donate money, medical items, personal supplies, or food. Please check the web for current needs in our food pantry at <https://tri-lakescares.org/donate/current-needs>. Donation drop-off hours are Mon.-Thu., 9 am-4 pm. For more information about Tri-Lakes Cares or how you can help, contact Tri-Lakes Cares at 719-481-4864 or info@tri-lakescares.org.

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@TriLakes-Seniors.org. Senior Beat can also be viewed online at www.TriLakesSeniors.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/volunteering-and-donations, for groups like Care and Share, Crossfire Ministries, 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).
- **The Colorado State University Extension office** in El Paso County has several opportunities for individuals interested in volunteering. <https://elpaso.extension.colostate.edu/volunteer-opportunities/>
- **El Paso County volunteer-based and nonprofit organizations** are omitted to building healthy, caring communities and rely on the hard work of individuals like you. Reach out today and find out how you

- can play a part by becoming a volunteer in El Paso County. Get involved in El Paso County volunteering non-profits and organizations! <https://www.american-towns.com/el-paso-county-co/volunteer-organizations/>.
- **The El Paso County Sheriff's Office** Volunteer Program is composed of a collective citizens group with a true and common desire to partner with the El Paso County Sheriff's Office by volunteering their services while learning more about the internal workings of the law enforcement community. <https://www.epc-sheriffsoffice.com/volunteer-program-0>.
 - **The El Paso County Volunteer Program** is a wonderful opportunity for citizens to learn about the various functions of county government as well as give back to the community. The County's numerous boards and commissions need your experience, talents and time. <https://bocc.elpasoco.com/volunteer>.
 - **Children's Literacy Center** provides free one-on-one literacy tutoring to Tri-Lakes children in grades 1-6 who are reading below grade level! Tutoring is at the Tri-Lakes Senior Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:30-6:30 pm, and our Summer Session will run through Aug. 14. For more information, to become a volunteer tutor or to enroll your child, visit www.childrensliteracycenter.org or email Christine Jeffson at Christine@childrensliteracycenter.org.

Our Community Calendar

By Janet Sellers
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. Please contact calendar@ocn.me with changes and additions.

GOVERNMENTAL BODIES

- Forest Lakes Metropolitan District, Pinon Pines Metropolitan District 1, 2 & 3 board meeting. Typically meets quarterly on the first Mon., 4 pm Meetings are held via teleconference. For virtual joining instructions and updates see www.forestlakesmetro-district.com.
- Monument Town Council meeting, Mon., Oct. 2 & 16, 18, 6:30 pm, Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Normally meets first and third Mon. Info: 719-884-801, www.townofmonument.org/260/Board-of-Trustees-for-remote-attendance-links.
- El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) regular meeting, usually every Tue., 9 am. There is an additional regular meeting scheduled for Thu., Oct. 19, 9 am. BOCC land use meetings in Oct. are being held on Thu. Oct. 12 & 26, 1 pm. View agendas and meetings at www.agendasuite.org/iiip/elpaso. Meetings are held at Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade Ave., Suite 150, Colo. Springs. Info: 719-520-643.
- El Paso County Planning Commission meeting, Thu., Oct. 5 & 19, 9 am Regional Development Center, 2880 International Circle, Colo. Springs. Meetings are live-streamed on the El Paso County News & Information Channel at <https://www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel>. Normally meets first & third Thu. (as required). Info: 719-520-6300, <https://planningdevelopment.elpasoco.com/2023-meetings/>
- Woodmoor Water & Sanitation District board meeting, Mon., Oct. 9, 1 pm (one-time date change), 1845 Woodmoor Dr., Monument. Normally meets second Mon. Info: 719-488-2525, www.woodmoorwater.com.
- Tri-Lakes Wastewater Facility Joint Use Committee meeting, Tue., Oct. 10, 10 am 16510 Mitchell Ave. Meets second Tue. Info: See <https://tlwastewater.com/index.html> Bill Burks, 719-481-4053.
- Palmer Lake Board of Adjustments, Tue., Oct. 10, 5 pm, 28 Valley Crescent St., Palmer Lake. Normally meets first Tues., as needed.
- Lewis-Palmer School District 38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee (formerly DAAC), Tue., Oct. 10, Palmer Lake Elementary School, 115 Upper Glenway Palmer Lake. Meets six times a year. Usually meets monthly on second Tue., 6-8 pm, Monument. Contact info: tmckee@lewispalmer.org.
- Palmer Lake Sanitation District board meeting, Wed., Oct. 11, 9 am, call-in only: 650-479-3208, Access Code 76439078, 120 Middle Glenway. Meets second Wed. Info: 719-481-2732. www.plsd.org.
- Monument Planning Commission meeting, Wed., Oct. 11, 6 pm Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Meets second Wed. To see the options for remote public participation in each meeting, visit www.townofmonument.org/263/Planning-Commission-Board-of-Adjustment. Info: 719-884-8028. www.townofmonument.org.
- Monument Academy School Board, Thu., Oct. 12, 6:30 pm, East Campus gym, 4303 Pinehurst Circle. The MA board usually meets the second Thu. of the month. Info: 719-431-8001, www.monumentacademy.net/school-board
- Palmer Lake Board of Trustees meeting, Thu., Oct. 12 & 26, 5 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent, Usually meets second and fourth Thu. Info: 719-481-2953. www.townofpalmerlake.com.
- Monument Sanitation District board meeting, Wed., Oct. 18, 9 am, 130 Second St. Zoom meeting. Find joining instructions on the website. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-4886, www.colorado.gov/msd.
- Palmer Lake Town Planning Commission meeting, Wed., Oct. 18, 6 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-2953, www.townofpalmerlake.com.
- Academy Water and Sanitation District board meeting, Wed., Oct. 18, 6 pm. Usually meets third Wed. Public can join the Skype meeting: <https://join.skype.com/PACujKTn7NrH>. Check the website for a link: <https://academywsd.colorado.gov/notices-and-alerts>. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-0711, <https://academywsd.colorado.gov>.
- Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District board meeting, in person or via Zoom, Wed., Oct. 18, 7 pm, Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining instructions at www.bffire.org or contact Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn at 719-495-4300. Meetings are usually held on the third Wednesday.
- El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority meeting, Thu., Oct. 19, 9 am Monument Town Hall Boardroom, 645 Beacon Lite Rd. Meets third Thu. Info: 719-488-3603. www.loopwater.org.
- Donala Water & Sanitation District board meeting,

- Thu., Oct. 19, 1:30 pm, 15850 Holbein Dr. In 2023, meets third Thu., Check the website for the access code for the electronic meeting. Info: 719-488-3603, www.donalawater.org.
- Triview Metropolitan District board meeting, Thu., Oct. 19, 5:30 pm, 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302, Monument. Normally meets third Thu. Info: 719-488-6868, www.triviewmetro.com.
 - Lewis-Palmer School District 38 board meeting, Mon., Oct. 23, 6-10 pm. Normally meets third Mon. The Board of Education meeting will be live-streamed on the district's YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/LPSDCCommunity, agenda, and supporting documents at <https://go.boarddocs.com/co/lewispalmer/Board.nsf/vpublic>. Contact Vicki Wood. Phone: 719.481.9546 Email: vwood@lewispalmer.org Website: <https://www.lewispalmer.org>.
 - Woodmoor Improvement Association Board Meeting, Wed., Oct. 25, 7 pm, Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. The WIA Board usually meets fourth Wed. Info: 719-488-2693, www.woodmoor.org.
 - Monument Fire District board meeting, in person or via Zoom, Wed., Oct. 25, 6:30 pm., Station 1, 18650 Highway 105, Monument. Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining instructions at <http://www.monumentfire.org>, or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin, at 719-484-0911.
 - Donald Wescott Fire Protection District meeting, Meets every other month on the fourth Wed. The next meeting is Wed., Nov. 15, 4:30 pm, at Station 1, 18650 Highway 105 Monument. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining instructions at <http://www.monumentfire.org> or contact Jennifer Martin, at 719-484-0911.

WEEKLY & MONTHLY EVENTS

- AARP Local Senior Social, fourth Wed., 12455 Black Forest Rd. Info: www.aarpchapter1100blackforest.weekly.com.
- A.A. Big Book Study, every Thu., 7 pm, Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 W. Baptist Rd. Call 425-436-6200, access code 575176#.
- Alcoholics Anonymous, every Tue. & Thu., 7:30 p.m. Black Forest Lutheran Church, 12455 Black Forest Road, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80908. AA is a fellowship of people who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. Join us with your questions. Info: bfllc@bflchurch.org,
- Al-Anon for family and friends of alcoholics every Tue. & Thu., 7:30 p.m. Black Forest Lutheran Church, 12455 Black Forest Road, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80908. Al-Anon members are people, just like you, who are worried about someone with a drinking problem. Join us with your questions. Info: bfllc@bflchurch.org
- Al-Anon Zoom Meeting, Just for Today Online, every Mon., 9-10 am Zoom Meeting ID: 889 4142 7446, Password 349309.
- Al-anon Meeting: Monument, every Thu., 7-8 pm, Ascent Church (formerly the Tri-Lakes Chapel), 1750 Deer Creek Rd., Monument. Info: MonumentSerenity@gmail.com.
- Al-Anon meeting: Letting Go, every Thu., 9-10:15 am at Ascent Church, 1750 Deer Creek Rd., Monument. For additional information go to www.al-anon-co.org.
- Amateur ham radio WØTLM (Tri-Lakes Monument ham radio Association), third Mon. All amateur ham radio operators or those interested in becoming one are welcome. Info: www.WØTLM.com.
- Benet Hill Monastery, Let us pray with you, walk in the forest, come up and visit prayer sites, every Sun. worship is 10:15 am, 3190 Benet Lane, 80921. See ad on page 3.
- Benet Hill Monastery, Half Day Prayer Group, first Sat., 9 am-12 pm. All vaccinated guests are welcome. Contact Sister Therese at (719) 355-1638 or (719) 355-1650 or stherese@benethillmonastery.org. See ad on page 3.
- Benet Hill Monastery Centering Prayer Group, every Tue., 10-11 am. All vaccinated guests are welcome. Contact Sister Therese at (719) 355-1638 or (719) 355-1650 or stherese@benethillmonastery.org. See ad on page 3.
- AARP Black Forest #1100, second Wed., noon. All ages welcome. In-person, Black Forest Lutheran Church, 12455 Black Forest Rd.
- Black Forest Community Church - Centering Prayer Group, first Sat., 8:30-10 am The Old Log Church. Centering prayer opens and closes the meetings with discussion and fellowship in between; open to all. Contact Rev. Roger Butts, at 719-433-3135, for information.
- Children's Literacy Center, every Mon. & Wed., 5:30-6:30 pm. Provides free one-on-one literacy tutoring to Tri-Lakes children in grades 1-6 who are reading below grade level. Tutoring is at Grace Best Educa-

- tion Center, 66 Jefferson St. Monument. For more information, to become a volunteer tutor, or to enroll your child, visit www.childrensliteracycenter.org or contact Rachel Morin, Tri-Lakes Senior Center Coordinator, CLC 610-246-1047 (cell).
- Colorado Springs Philharmonic Guild Listening Club, third Wed. Free virtual event. Maestro Wilson will conduct monthly hour-long programs. RSVP at www.cspguild.org.
 - Essentrics Fitness Program at Senior Center, every Tue., 9 am & Thu., 10 am, Grace Best Education Center, 66 Jefferson St, Monument, CO 80132. Registration & info: Sue Walker, 719-330-0241, www.trilakes-seniors.org.
 - Fellowship of Christ Church, every Sun., 9 am. 4303 Pinehurst Circle. See ad on page 6.
 - Friends of Fox Run Park, fourth Thu. Zoom meeting, 7 pm, email friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com, they will email you the link the day of the meeting. Join the growing group to learn about volunteering and supporting the park for forest safety, trails, trees, education, special events, and more. Info: friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com.
 - Friends of Monument Preserve (FOMP) Trail Repair monthly Work Days, second Tue. Apr.-Oct. Next meeting: Tue., Oct. 10, 5 pm. Meet at Mt Herman Trailhead at the corner of Mt Herman Rd and Nursery Rd, bring gloves. FOMP needs volunteers to help repair the trails in the National Forest Open Space surrounding the Monument Fire Center. The Forest Service recently completed the second phase of Fire Mitigation work and many of the social trails have been damaged. The Forest Service relies on FOMP to maintain these trails. Tools will be provided.
 - Fuel Church Griefshare, every Thu., 5:30-7:30 pm, 643 State Highway 105, Palmer Lake. Email info@fuel.org.
 - Fuel Church Sunday Service, every Sun. Service times, 11:00 am Live service streaming at www.fuelchurch.org. Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Nursery and kids' service. Non-denominational, spirit-filled. Need prayer? Email us at info@fuel.org. See ad on page 5.
 - German Conversation Group, every Mon., 1:30 pm, Monument Library, 1706 Woodmoor Drive. Public welcome with Intermediate to Advanced German speaking skills.
 - Gleneagle Sertoma, first and third Wed., 11:45 am to 1 pm at Beasts and Brews, 7 Spectrum Loop, Colorado Springs. The longest continuously serving civic service organization in northern El Paso County features a program speaker addressing local topics of interest. Info: Duane Gritzmaker, dwgritz@gmail.com or 719-649-9220.
 - Gleneagle Women's Club, membership luncheon, third Fri., Sep.-June, various venues, 12 activity groups, i.e., hiking, bridge, etc. Guests welcome. For information contact Susan Owen, 719-886-7110.
 - GriefShare Support Group, last Tue. of the month, 10:30 am-noon. NEW LOCATION: Tri-Lakes Senior Center, 66 Jefferson St. in the Grace Best Elementary School building. The Tri-Lakes Silver Alliance has partnered with Colorado Palliative and Hospice Care to host a 13-session grief support group in Monument. RSVP, info: Sue Walker, 719-330-0241.
 - La Leche League breastfeeding support group, second Mon., 7 pm. Partners and helpers welcome (and babies and kids, too) so we can meet our breastfeeding goals together. Black Forest Community Center 12530 Black Forest Rd, Colorado Springs, CO 80908. For more information, contact RachelKLangley@gmail.com.
 - Lions Club Bingo, every Sat. (except the first Sat.), 8:30 am-1 pm and first Mon., 5:30-10 pm Tri-Lakes Lions Club's portion of the proceeds benefit those in need in the Tri-Lakes community. Updated info and location: Jim Naylor, 719-481-8741 or www.trilakeslionsclub.org.
 - Monument Dementia Caregiver Support Group, second Sat., 9:45-11:15 am. Meets in Person, First National Bank Monument (581 Highway 105, Monument, CO 80132). Meets monthly, 2nd Sat. Contact: Registration is required, call 800-272-3900 or email khare@alz.org to register.
 - Monument Hill Kiwanis Club meeting, every Sat., 8 am. www.MHKiwanis.org, MonumentHillKiwanis@gmail.com for details, guests are welcome. Service leadership clubs, Key clubs, Builders Club, and K-kids at D38 schools. Memberships are open to the public. Info: RF Smith, 719-210-4987, www.MHKiwanis.org.
 - Monument Life Recovery Group, every Mon., 6:30-7:30 pm, 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 for children under age 11. Info: 303-946-2659, www.liferecoverygroups.com/meetings/life-recovery-group-3/.
 - Neighborhood Net Ham Radio, every Sat., 10 am Amateur ham radio operators practice for emergencies on weekly repeater nets so neighbors can help

- neighbors. Sign up at www.mereowx.org/neighborhood-net or contactus@mereowx.org.
- Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO) meeting, Sat., Nov. 11, 10 am-12 pm., Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. HOA legal topics. Members of local HOAs are welcome. Usually meets bi-monthly (Jan., Mar., May, July, Sep., Nov.) on the second Sat. of the month. www.nepco.org.
 - Old Fashioned Community Sing-along. First and third Mon. 5:30 to 6:30 pm Black Forest Community Church 6845 Shoup Rd. Come share the joy of singing old, familiar, catchy tunes just for fun. For details: kay@stricklan.net.
 - Palmer Divide Quiltmakers, first Thu., 6:30-8:30 pm at Monument Chamber of Commerce building, 166 2nd St, Monument, CO.
 - Palmer Lake Art Group, second Sat. A variety of art programs are offered after the social gathering and business meetings. Guests welcome. 300 Hwy 105, NE corner of I-25 and 105. 9:30 am. Info: 719-460-4179, www.palmerlakeartgroup.com.
 - Palmer Lake Historical Society, Thu., Oct. 19., 7 pm; (doors open at 6:30 pm), Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent St. Usually meets third Thu. Contact: Kokesdm@yahoo.com, <https://palmerdividehistory.org>.
 - Pikes Peak Genealogical Society meeting, Wed., Oct. 11, 7 pm, Cheri Daniels and the macabre side of genealogy. Normally meets monthly, second Wed. Members can log in and get the monthly meeting Zoom link. Guests are welcome to attend, please request an invitation from the PPGS president at www.PPGS.org.
 - Ridgeview Baptist Church, every Sun., 10:30 am, temporarily meeting at 9130 Explorer Dr., Colorado Springs, 80920. Info: 719-357-6515 or www.ridgeviewcolorado.org. See ad on page 6.
 - Senior Bingo, third Wed. Silver Alliance Senior Center, Space is limited to 16. participants. RSVP & info: Sue Walker, 719-464-6873, or email sue@monumentalfitness.
 - Senior Book Club, second Fri., 11 am-noon, Silver Alliance Senior Center, all are welcome. Coffee & snacks. RSVP & info: Sue, 719-330-0241.
 - Tri-Lakes Parkinson's Disease Support Group, third Sat., 10 am-noon, Monument Community Presbyterian Church, 238 Third St., Monument. Info: Syble Krafft, 719-488-2669; Barry (group president), 719-351-9485. If you need any help, please call Syble or Barry.
 - Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church, Worship every Sun., 9 am Contemporary; 10:30 am Traditional. A live stream is available at www.tlumc.org/live. Watch live or replay: www.facebook.com/tlumc, www.youtube.com/tlumc.org. Info: 719-488-1365, www.tlumc.org. 20256 Hunting Downs Way, Monument. See ad on page 2.
 - Tri-Lakes Church of Christ Wednesday night fellowship classes, every Wed., 6-7:30 pm, 20450 Beacon Lite Road, Monument (corner of Beacon Lite & County Line Roads). Info: 719-488-9613, gregsmith@trilakeschurch.org, www.trilakeschurch.org.
 - Tri-Lakes Cruisers, first Wed., 7 pm. A nonprofit car club. Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce community room, with numerous activities and events each month. Club membership applications are now being accepted and are available on the website: <https://tlcruisers.weebly.com>.
 - Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce Networking breakfast, first and third Thu., in person or via Zoom 166 2nd Street Monument 7:30-9 am free registration at www.TriLakeschamber.com.
 - Tri-Lakes Women's Club (TLWC) monthly meeting. Fri., Oct. 13, 11:30 a.m. Falcon Club, USAFA. Guest speaker Nancy Pokorny (TLWC Member and Past President) shares insights through pictures, video and stories gleaned from visiting 58 countries. Usually meets the third Fri. To become a member, or learn about the club, visit our website at www.tlwc.net Contact Info: Tri-Lakes Women's Club membership@tlwc.net.
 - Women's A. A. Step Study, every Mon., 6:30 pm, meeting remotely, check for details. Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 Baptist Rd. Park in the west lot. Info: 866-641-9190. Al-Anon Zoom Meeting, Just for Today Online, every Mon., 9:00 - 10:00 am Zoom Meeting ID: 889 4142 7446, Password 349309
 - Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7829, third Wed., 7 pm, Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce community room, 166 2nd St., Monument. New members welcome. Info: Post Commander and POC Bruce Beyerly, Bruce.Beyerly@gmail.com.
 - VFW Auxiliary to Post 7829, third Wed., 7 pm, 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 relative of a veteran who served on foreign soil during war or other military action, you may be eligible. Info: Kathy Carlson, 719-488-1902, carlsonmkc@aol.com.

SPECIAL EVENTS

- VOLUNTEER TODAY! Our Community News mailing days, Thu., Oct. 5 & Nov. 2, approx. 9 am-2 pm. We are all volunteers at OCN and need YOUR help, even for an hour or two, getting the papers ready to mail. Contact AllenAlchian@ocn.me or (719) 488-3455.
- Pikes Peak Brewing Company Pop-up Smokehouse, every Fri., & Sat. until it's gone. 1756 Lake Woodmoor Dr. Monument. See ad on page 2.
- Palmer Lake Arts Council presents Romance at the Chautauqua, an original play set in 1901 when the Palmer Lake Chautauqua was the place to be in Colorado. Choose from three performances: Fri., Oct. 6, 7 pm, Sun, Oct. 8, 2 pm, and 6 pm on the stage of the Palmer Lake Town Hall. Ticket information at www.PLartscouncil.org
- Meet your firefighters event, Sat., Oct. 7, 11-2 pm, free food, goodies for kids, check out the fire engines; Station 4, Monument Fire, 15415 Gleneagle Dr.
- Miner's pumpkin patch, every Sat. in Oct. Western Museum of Mining and Industry. See ad on page 9.
- Take a Kid Mountain Biking Day, Sat., Oct. 7, 9 am; trail riding etiquette handouts, riding clinics, giveaways.. This is a terrific way to get kids outside and develop their mountain biking skills. All ages tots to teens, just need a working bike and helmet to participate. Info: www.communityservices.elpasoco.com/take-kid-mountain-biking/
- PTSD: What You See, Feel, Do About it, Sun., Oct. 8, 1-3 p.m. Do you know someone with Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)? Does it impact family, friends, you? Speaker: Jim Cunningham, LPC, a 24-year Air

- Force veteran and professional counselor, will conduct this 2-hour session including a presentation and open discussion on PTSD which is open to our congregation and community. Family of Christ Lutheran Church Youth Center (West Entrance) 675 Baptist Rd. Hosted by FOC Stephen Ministry.
- Monument Hill Farmers Market, every Sat., 8 am-2 pm until Oct. 14. 66 Jefferson Street Monument. See ad on page 5.
 - MVEA Member appreciation day, Wed., Oct. 11. Lunch, pie, more: 11 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. At the Falcon office 11140 East Woodman Road 80831.
 - Annual pumpkin giveaway! Sat., Oct. 14, 10 am-2 pm. FREE pumpkins, candy, live music, and a delicious food truck. Sponsored by Monument Professional Firefighters local 4319. Monument marketplace clock tower 15986 Jackson Creek Pkwy. Please bring a non-perishable food item for the Tri Lakes Cares food drive!
 - Kiwanis Fundraiser adventure wine and dining for the Heart of Monument play park, Sun., Oct. 15. 1-4 pm. see ad on page 3.
 - Lifting Spirits Going Out of Business Sale, Mon.-Thu., Oct. 16-26. See ad on page 8.
 - The Love Shop - Restyle Your Fur Event, Mon.-Tue., Oct. 16-17. See ad on page 8.
 - 100+ Women Who Care Bi-Annual Meeting, Wed. Oct. 18, 5 pm, We are 100+ Women committed to contributing \$100 two times a year to local Tri-Lakes charities, which will positively impact our communities by allowing us to give up to \$20,000 annually. Together we can make a difference that we can see! Big impact, without a big commitment. Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Drive. For more info: <http://www.100womenwhocaretrilakes.com/>.
 - D38 Dream Team versus Harlem Wizards, Wed., Oct. 18, 7-9 pm. See ad on page 9.
 - Covered Treasures Bookstore, Sat., Oct. 21, 1-4 pm, author Bethany Turner will sign Brynn and Sebastian Hate Each Other, 105 Second Street, Monument.
 - AARP Drivers Safety Class - AARP Drivers Safety class: Thu., Oct. 26, 12 - 4 pm Black Forest Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall 12455 Black Forest Road in Colorado Springs. \$20 for AARP members, \$25 for non-members. Cash or check; call 710.597.5683 to register.
 - St. Peter Catholic School Trunk or Treat, Fri., Oct. 27, food trucks 5-7 pm, trunk or treating 6-7 pm. 124 First St. Monument. Info: spctrunkortreat@gmail.com.
 - Front Range Maker's Market, Sat.-Sun., Oct. 28 - 29. Lewis Palmer High School, Sat. 9 am-4 pm, Sun. 10 am-3 pm. \$5 at the door. See ad on page 28.
 - YMCA 5K race series: Creepy crawl, Sat., Oct. 28; Turkey trot, Thu., Nov., 23; Jingle jog, Sat., Dec. 9. See ad on page 6.
 - Make It Work Clinic for PCs, FREE. Donations appreciated. We are gauging interest in helping community members with their PCs, please email us if interested. enable@monumentalimpact.org. 55 Adams St in Downtown Monument. Monumental Impact info/register: <https://monumentalimpact.org>.
 - A Time to Dance: Dance classes for everyone. See ad on page 4.
 - Affordable Flooring Connection, special offers. See ad on page 2.
 - Cornerstone Cleaners, special offers through Oct. 31. 1030 W. Baptist Road, near King Soopers. See ad on page 4.
 - Eagle Wine & Spirits, special offers through Oct. 31. Baptist Road next to King Soopers. See ad on page 3.
 - Eric Ellison, the "Lightfoot of the Rockies", Colorado music performances. See ad on page 4.
 - Fall Mountain Farm, Family fun for everyone: pumpkin patch, scavenger hunt, hayrides & more, see ad on page 17.
 - Freedom School of Martial arts, confidence course, special offer, see ad on pages 4 and 15.
 - Gleneagle Candle Co., special offers through Oct. 31. 13796 Gleneagle Drive 80921. See ad on page 4.
 - Monument Cleaners, special offers through Oct. 31., 15932 Jackson Creek Pkwy., in Monument Marketplace. See ad on page 5.
 - Monumental Med Spa, Special offers through Oct. 31. 88 Hwy 105. See ad on page 7.
 - Noel Relief Centers, new patient specials. 950 Baptist Rd #130, Monument. See ad on page 7.
 - Peakview Windows, Siding, Stucco. Special offers through Oct. 31. See ad on page 28.
 - The Living Room Plants, special offers through Oct. 31, 12229 Voyager Pkwy, Suite 100. See ad on page 5.
 - Tri-Lakes Collision and Auto Service Center, special offers through Oct. 31. 2101 Wolf Court, Monument. www.trilakescollision.com. See ad on page 5.
 - The Vanity Box, special offers, facial revivals, and more. See ad on page 3.

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 or (719) 488-3455 with any questions.

- Community Technology & Engineering Networking Meeting, Sat., Nov. 18, 9 am-10 am. Join community members to network and connect. Hosted by Monumental Impact. Breakfast and refreshments available. 55 Adams St., Monument. Contact: enable@monumentalimpact.org.
- The MITEE Gobble Squabble: A Technology & Engineering Exhibition presented by D38's Bearbotics, Sat., Nov. 18, FREE entertainment of student-built robots, scrimmage matches, ant-weight combat bots (adults can compete too!), project shares and more. Grace Best in Monument. More information: <https://monumentalimpact.org/events/mittee-gobblesquabble/>
- International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day. Annual community and worldwide event Sat., Nov. 18. Speaker, kids panel, adults panel and discussion, refreshments, more. Woodman Valley Chapel. Details: www.woodmenvalley.org or contact Saucedo 719-488-8280
- Book signing by Lisa Hatfield, Sat., Nov. 25. Covered Treasures bookstore. See ad on page 5.

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 send the information to calendar@ocn.me or Our Community News, P.O. Box 1742, Monument, Colorado 80132.

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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 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 John Heiser, Publisher, at (719) 488-3455 or 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. The number of letters printed on a particular topic or in a particular issue may be limited. 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, Nov. 4

Ad space reservations due: **Fri., Oct. 13**
Finished ad artwork due: **Fri., Oct. 20**
Letters to the editor due: **Fri., Oct. 20**
Calendar items due: **Fri., Oct. 27**

Visit our website to read, download, and search all the back issues at
WWW.OCN.ME



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Event information: calendar@ocn.me

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