

TLMFPD (Cont. from page 1)

full-time staff to put the missing engine back in regular service by around Aug. 1, since by then three new firefighter/EMTs would be finished with training. The district also hopes to have hired four new paramedics by then, said Deputy Chief Randy Trost.

“Should daily environmental conditions change such that there is a heightened risk to our area on any given day, we will

return, for that day, to a normal if not overstaffed, model,” Truty said.

Secretary Mike Smaldino, who is a firefighter for Colorado Springs, made many comments including:

- Since I have been on the board, our daily staffing has continued to reduce ... but our expenditures have not reduced.
- We are trying to fix some things done in the past, but it does not feel good,

because we have one less engine on the street (in Woodmoor), the biggest wildland-urban interface (WUI) in our area.

- I don't want to go down this road again.... Other districts are having staff retention issues too, but not everyone is shutting down an engine. Our first effective firefighting force has been reduced.
- I need you (Truty) to lead us in the right direction. It is not my role to come up with something.
- I understand that the stress of firefighters needs to be reduced ... but to have one, two, three people leave and we have to shut down an engine feels like we are way far behind where we should be.

Truty said, “This does not feel good to us. We agonized over this decision.... The mill levy increase would help us be more proactive instead of reactive.”

Mill levy information meetings and citizens task force update

Truty said about 65 people attended the two community information meetings held in May and that so far 325 public opinion surveys had been turned in. Both meetings included 90-minute explanations of exactly how the hoped-for increased revenue from a mill levy increase would be allocated to five categories of expenditures. See answers to frequently asked questions at <http://tlmfire.org/mill-levy>. He was also scheduled to speak at the Woodmoor Improvement Association on May 25. See the related WIA article on page 22.

Truty's statements at the May 17 community information meeting included:

- District revenue comes only from property taxes (78 percent), special ownership taxes, and emergency services billing. Neither the state nor the county pitch in.
- If the increase from 11.5 to



Above: Matthew Edmunds, left, AJ Armstrong, and Golden Rains just graduated from the 14-week firefighter academy at West Metro Denver and are now doing more training as new hires within the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District. On May 24, they were sworn in by Chief Chris Truty, and then they presented the district with their class flag and a plaque with a fire bell listing the graduates as well as the West Metro and TLMFPD officers who taught the classes. *Photo by Lisa Hatfield.*

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Above: Newly-promoted Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District Battalion Chief Kris Mola was sworn in by Chief Chris Truty on May 24. Mola's wife Marnel, along with Emma and Jackson, pinned on his new badge. *Photo by Lisa Hatfield.*

from residents, TLMFPD has now listed a series of calculation examples at <http://tlmfire.org/mill-levy-calcs>.

Truty explained that additional revenue generated by the 2017 increase in assessed home values seen in the Tri-Lakes area will be offset by this anticipated drop in the residential tax assessment rate determined by the state due to the Gallagher Amendment.

The residential property tax assessment rate will be determined by the state, and due to