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Issue #240 — Volume 21 Number 2 — Saturday, February 6, 2021

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Donald Wescott Fire Protection  
District, Jan. 19

## Chief Burns to retire after over 40 years



**Above:** DWFPD Chief Burns.  
Photo courtesy DWFPD.

By Allison Robenstein

The Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) board met Jan. 19 and heard the public resignation of Chief Vinny Burns. The board discussed but didn't vote on an issue with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant funding that could cost more to fix than the district is paying. A large donation of \$5,000 is being spent on personal protective armor.

### After over 40 years, retirement is in sight

Burns started his monthly report with the usual reporting but ended by saying, "I have given notice of intent to retire." Noting health issues, he said he was thankful the leadership "saw something in a shaggy, long-haired, bearded kid and gave him a chance to be on the fire department." Burns joined before the district was called Donald Wescott and

**DWFPD (Cont. on 2)**

## In this issue

Fire District News 1-7  
Monument News 1, 7-13  
Palmer Lake News 13-16  
Water & San District News 16-21  
D38 School District News 21-23  
County News 23-24  
HOA News 24  
Weather 24-25  
Letters 25  
Columns 25-26  
Snapshots and photo contest 27-28  
Notices and Calendar 28-31

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## Ice Fishing on Monument Lake



**Above:** Members of the International Association of Fire Fighters, Local 4319 Monument, enjoyed family fun ice fishing at Monument Lake on Jan. 23. Despite the cold and breezy weather, about 50 firefighters with their families set their fishing rods over neatly drilled holes and waited patiently for a few fish to bite. Alas, the fish were elusive for most, but nevertheless the participants were treated to a delicious lunch catered by Smokey the Pig Wood Pit BBQ. Photo by Natalie Barszcz.

Monument Board of Trustees, Jan. 19

## Financial investigation finds no wrongdoing; bond-related water projects move forward

By Allison Robenstein

During the Jan. 19 regular meeting of the Monument Board of Trustees, Mayor Don Wilson said the investigation into the town's finances has been closed with no indication of a crime being committed. The board approved three water project-related resolutions and the updated hazard mitigation plan, reappointed a planning commissioner, and discussed but made no decisions on the newest purchasing policy.

Trustee Jamy Unruh was noted absent.

### Town finances cleared of any wrongdoing

Wilson told the board he received notification from a Department of Justice assistant U.S. attorney that the Town of Monument's finance investigation had been closed with no indication of any crime being committed. Wilson said it was his opinion that the investigation had been started maliciously by someone with a distaste for town staff.

Then Town Treasurer Pamela Smith was put onto administrative leave when the town acknowledged the ongoing investigation. She was later dismissed from town employment. See Vol. 19 No. 4 - April 6, 2019 (ocn.me).

### Water projects approved being paid for with bond money

Public Works Director Tom Tharnish asked the board to approve work on the town's newest well, No.10, which has been completed and sits at the headwaters of Monument Lake (See photo on

page 27). To bring the well online, the next phase of the installation process is to route the raw water into treatment plant 4/5. Tonight's request for \$46,300 will allow Forsgren Associates to tie the well into the treatment plant by installing the pump drive and piping connection. Tharnish expects the well to be online this summer.

During the Sept. 21 BOT meeting, the board approved \$22 million for the sale of certificates of participation in the form of rentals to leased town property. This money is to be used solely to complete water-related projects. See Vol. 20 No. 10 - October 3, 2020 (ocn.me).

Tharnish also requested \$68,100 to expand treatment plant 4/5 to make room for the additional equipment and personnel. Forsgren Associates will design and engineer the addition.

Both resolutions passed 5-1. Trustee Laurie Clark voted against both with no reason given. But later in the meeting, she asked about the bidding process of town projects in general, noting that when other businesses want to be competitive and make an appeal for a project, "they feel they are being discriminated against because these same companies are always chosen."

Town Attorney Andrew Richie disputed her statement, saying, "I am unaware of any responsive bidders that have followed the RFP process and are the lowest bidder that are not being selected."

**MONUMENT (Cont. on 7)**

Monument Board of Trustees  
Special Meeting, Jan. 11

## Town passes pandemic- related resolution

By Allison Robenstein

During a workshop and special meeting held Jan. 11, the Monument Board of Trustees approved a pandemic-related resolution. Initially, the resolution was intended to make Monument a sanctuary city, giving businesses the ability to use their best judgment regarding COVID-19. Instead, the board asserted its right to condemn the executive orders of Gov. Jared Polis.

Polis created the first executive order on March 26 and others followed. Critical businesses are exempt from many of the orders. The state's list of critical businesses includes:

- Healthcare operations.
- Infrastructure, such as utilities, oil and gas production, public water and wastewater.
- Manufacturing, such as food processing, medical equipment.
- Retail, such as grocery stores and gas stations.
- Services, such as trash and recycling, laundromats, and auto supply.
- News media.
- Financial institutions.
- Providers of basic necessities such as homeless shelters and food banks.
- Construction and defense.
- Services that maintain safety, in-

**RESOLUTION (Cont. on 10)**



**DWFPD (Cont. from 1)**  
has volunteered and worked here for over 40 years.  
Although there have been five executive sessions regarding personnel issues, including Nov. 12 and 20, Dec. 29, and

Jan. 6 and 12, there was no connection to the chief's retirement mentioned.  
"It has been a pleasure to serve this community," said Burns. Chairman Mark Gunderman said this is the end of an era. Several of the firefighters thanked the

chief for his leadership over the years. "Chief Burns has always been there, including promotions," said Battalion Chief Shannon Balvanz "It's going to be really difficult when he steps away."

**FEMA grant funding issue**  
Balvanz told the board about an issue with the FEMA grant funding the district

received in late 2020. The grant covers the cost of vehicle exhaust removal systems at all three stations. Wescott is responsible for a \$6,500 grant match. See Vol. 20 No. 12 - December 5, 2020 ([ocn.me](http://ocn.me)). Balvanz confirmed parts are being delivered to the stations with a project start date of Jan. 25. Unfortunately, and after the fact, he realized the electrical panel at Station 3 is not able to handle this new system's electrical requirements. The cost to update the panel is \$8,500. Though the project was never formally budgeted in 2020, the board approved the grant match as a necessary and beneficial expense. Board members quickly regrouped after hearing of the Station 3 electrical panel issue, asking if the project could be scaled down to only include Stations 1 and 2 since currently Station 3 is not used to deploy calls for service.

Chairman Mark Gunderman said, "before I would feel comfortable dumping \$8,500 into that" we should decide the long-term uses for that station. That's a can that's been kicked down the path, so the board should make that decision this year about its future use. The other directors agreed.

The board directed Balvanz to ask the installer what needs to be done to scale down the project and if there would be any costs involved in returning Station 3-related products that have already been



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**Above:** Unidentified Donald Wescott firefighters received their first round of COVID-19 shots. Though vaccinations are not mandatory, they are highly recommended by fire organizations. Photo courtesy DWFPD.

protective armor. See [www.ocn.me/v20n3.htm#dwfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v20n3.htm#dwfpd). Lt. Curt Leonhardt told the board nine sets of ballistic gear will be purchased with the money, including tactical vests and helmets. The lead time for the order is 10 to 12 weeks.

The meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

The next Donald Wescott fire district meeting is scheduled for Feb. 16. If the meeting is held in person, it will be at Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Dr. For a virtual meeting, the phone number is 669-900-9128, and the meeting code is 980 378 2073. Meetings are usually on the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. For information, call Executive Administrator Stacey

Popovich at 719-488-8680 or see [www.wescottfire.org](http://www.wescottfire.org).

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

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**Donation to be used to purchase personal protective armor**

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## Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District, Jan. 20

## Wildfire risk; exclusion/inclusion policy; COVID-19 protocols

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD) board meeting held at the Station 1 community room on Jan. 20, the board heard updates on wildfire risk and their regional training center, and approved a new policy related to dual taxation parcels. They discussed COVID-19 protocols and the district's limited funds for the first quarter of 2021.

Director Jim Abendschan was excused.

OCN used a recording of the meeting to write this article.

**Wildland fire concerns**

Chief PJ Langmaid said that 2021 poses the greatest risk

of wildland fires with the continued drought conditions, and it will take the entire community throughout the year to ensure the district does not have another devastating fire. See [www.bffire.org/ready-set-go-for-wildfire-action-planning-suggestions](http://www.bffire.org/ready-set-go-for-wildfire-action-planning-suggestions).

On Jan. 17, a grass fire in Black Forest ended up in the trees and 5,000 gallons of water were used to ensure the fire was fully extinguished.

An access issue exists at Milam/Old Ranch/Union that has been referred to the City Fire Marshal for resolution. Should a fire occur in that area, BFFRPD has no acceptable access, and the developer is being advised to provide access, said Langmaid.

**Exclusion/inclusion policy**

Chairman Rick Nearhoof requested the board consider adopting Resolution 2021-02—a resolution adopting fees and setting policy and procedures for inclusions and exclusions of property. Note: The board held a public work session via Zoom on Jan. 8 to discuss the policy and procedures before consulting with district counsel.

After a long discussion, the board adopted the resolution 4-0.

Colorado Springs resident Joel Helzer, who lives in the dual-taxation area at the south end of BFFRPD, asked the board what the dollar amount would be for the petition of exclusion of property. See [www.ocn.me/v20n12.htm#bffire](http://www.ocn.me/v20n12.htm#bffire) and [www.ocn.me/v21n1.htm#bffire](http://www.ocn.me/v21n1.htm#bffire).

Vice Chairman Nate Dowden said the fee would be \$2,000 per property with a \$750 fee due at the time of application. Helzer said the fees are an onerous amount for each parcel but would be reasonable for a petition with 22 parcels. He asked the board to consider an adjusted fee, but Treasurer Jack Hinton said, "There is a lot to consider," and enumerated multiple issues.

Hinton said, "In reality, the board came up with 10 items that factor into the fee and each homeowner has the right to wait for the city of Colorado Springs to complete the exclusion process and it will not cost a dime." **Note:** In the interim, residents in the dual-taxation area would continue to pay property taxes to both Colorado Springs and BFFRPD.

Nearhoof then addressed Helzer regarding the deficiencies in the petition for the 22 properties Helzer submitted for exclusion from BFFRPD on Nov. 22 and said the district is not denying the petition but does require corrections, which he described.

Helzer said that asking the homeowners for \$16,500

to re-submit the petition would be difficult.

Colorado Springs resident Colleen Murphy said the following:

- The 392 parcels that were being excluded at the end of 2020 would have cost \$784,000 at \$2,000 per parcel under this policy.
- The homeowners have been waiting seven years, paying double taxes, and it is disheartening to see both BFFRPD and Colorado Springs firefighters respond to every single call in the neighborhood, and it has to stop.
- What more can the residents do to move the process forward, since the process has not been working between Colorado Springs and BFFRPD.

Langmaid said, "After three years, it is very clear that the district and the residents want the exclusion process to occur."

"I recommend that the board stay on the timetable for the exclusion process, with the planned exclusion of 733 parcels per year," said Langmaid. See [www.bffire.org](http://www.bffire.org).

Helzer said he appreciated the board's efforts, and BFFRPD has done all it could.

The inclusion/exclusion policy with accompanying instructions is available at [www.bffire.org](http://www.bffire.org).

Langmaid also said the following:

- The city needs to resolve the issues they have created by continuing to annex unincorporated parcels throughout the county and then failing to exclude the parcels because they cannot meet the standards of coverage for fire protection services. See [www.ocn.me/v16n12.htm#dwfpd1115](http://www.ocn.me/v16n12.htm#dwfpd1115).
- Right up until a couple of hours before the arrival of Colorado Springs City Council member Andres Pico at the July 15 board meeting, the city had planned to charge BFFRPD all of the fees relating to the pending exclusion of the 2,200 properties.
- The city changed course shortly before the meeting commenced and decided to cover the cost of the exclusion process. See [www.ocn.me/v20n8.htm#bffire](http://www.ocn.me/v20n8.htm#bffire).

**COVID-19**

Langmaid responded to Black Forest resident Linda Smith's questions:

- The district has transported dozens of suspected COVID-19 patients in the Black Forest community with a significant increase over the past few months.
- After each suspected COVID-19 patient is transported, apparatus is decontaminated using a fogger with vegetable-based disinfectant at the station.
- EMS staff remove their personal protective equipment and dispose of it at the scene in a trash bag,

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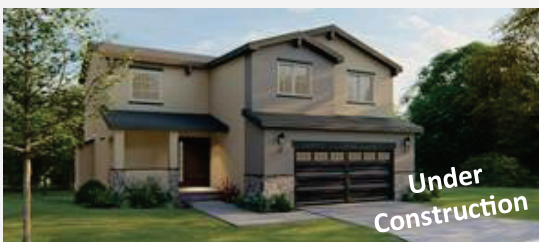
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then the suits are decontaminated at the station.

- Each call is handled with minimal exposure to staff.

COVID-19 vaccines have been made available to the staff, and individuals that wanted the shot have received it. Should staff decide to take the COVID-19 vaccine in the future, they will need to request the vaccination through the fire chief's office, said Langmaid.

#### Chief's report

Langmaid said the following:

- Spending has been curtailed except for "absolutely needed" items until property tax revenue is received in March.
- The Jan. 19 financial meeting with the accountant was cancelled due to weather conditions.
- The district has engaged a firm with a bio-psychologist to assist with refining the district's recruiting and retention of high-performing team members, which the community of Black Forest needs, considering the extremely minimal staffing.
- Melissa Bottorff has retired after 17 years as the district administrative assistant.
- The Requests for Proposals for the potential purchase of new apparatus were reviewed by the Apparatus Committee. No proposal was recommended since none met design specifications or cost specifications.

#### Financial update

Hinton read the January financial report to the board, however, OCN was unable to hear what was said on the

meeting recording due to extraneous noise. For more information, see [www.bffire.org](http://www.bffire.org).

Langmaid said the state "kicked back" the wildland firefighting reimbursement request of \$127,977 due to discrepancies, and the total reimbursement is now expected to be about \$104,000.

As of Feb. 1, the approved 2021 budget was not available for viewing on the district website, and it has not been made available to OCN despite requests.

The board approved the financial report, 4-0.

#### Training update

Langmaid said the state visited the district's Regional Fire Training Center and told the district's training officer, Capt. Chris Piepenburg, that they may be interested in assisting with further development now that the center has been opened up to neighboring fire districts and is seen as a valuable regional resource.

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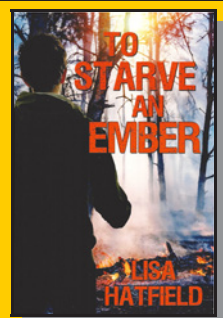
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trict's Regional Training Center.

- In 2018, the district documented 850 hours of training, and in 2020 there were more than 5,000 hours of training.
- The Training Center building has not been finished, and one of the projects for this year is to install stairs for the second floor, in line with the district trying to get a professional career academy going.

#### Annual meeting schedule

Resolution 2021-01—a resolution notifying the public

via the BFFRPD website of the scheduled board meetings and dates—was proposed. The board approved the resolution, 4-0. See [www.bffire.org](http://www.bffire.org).

#### Executive session

An executive session was held to discuss staffing and the exclusion process. The board moved into the executive session 24-6-402(4)(e) to determine positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations.

Board Secretary Donna Arkowski notified OCN that no actions were taken after the board exited the executive session, and the board had immediately adjourned

at 9:36 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

Meetings are usually held at 7 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month at BFFRPD Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Feb. 17 at 7 p.m. For updates and minutes, visit [www.bffire.org](http://www.bffire.org).

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

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### Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, Jan. 27

# 100-day plan; COVID-19 vaccinations; staff awards

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) board meeting on Jan. 27, the new fire chief updated the board on his promised 100-day plan, the board received an update on staff vaccinations, and multiple staff recognition awards were announced.

#### 100-day plan

TLMFPD's new Fire Chief Andy Kovacs said his 100-day plan has now been shared with the board and the line staff. The goals promised within the first 30 days of the 100-day plan have been met as follows:

- A meeting with the new union president, Engineer Jody Thorpe, established a scheduled monthly meeting to discuss any issues related specifically to Local 4319.
- Has met with President John Hildebrandt to discuss the fire district's history, budgeting, management style, and some of the board's expectations.
- To identify and report any current "cannot wait" issues. There aren't any at the moment.
- Provide regular communication, meeting with each shift through station visits, written communication, and focus group conversations, especially through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kovacs said there are more objectives for his first 100 days, and beyond that a comprehensive review of the 2019 Master Plan and a review of some internal documents that enforce some policies and procedures. Director of Administration Jennifer Martin said to the board, "Thank you to the board on behalf of the staff for bringing Chief Kovacs to the district, so far he is a good fit, so thank you!"

Vice President Roger Lance thanked Kovacs for allowing Emergency Incident Support (EIS) to park its 28-foot kitchen trailer at Station 1. The "all-volunteer" emergency services support group had nowhere to park the trailer that can feed up to 400 people per hour during emergency events. "At Station 1, EIS knows it is safe and secure," said Lance. Note: EIS used to store its vehicles at Wescott Station 3.

#### Chief's report

Kovacs said B Shift, Engine 3 responded to a residential fire alarm in December. The crew was intuitive enough to contact the homeowner and used the Ring door camera to assist in locating a key to gain access without damaging the property. Upon entering they discovered a small fire in a malfunctioning dishwasher. The in-home fire alarm system is credited for preventing a larger fire.

Kovacs gave an update on the executive staff report for December and said the following:

- Deputy Chief Randy Trost continues to participate in the I-25 emergency working group meetings.
- Firefighters Garrett O'Hara, Jay Bruchis, and Nathan Boyce are performing exceptionally well at the fire academy.
- All officers have completed their Blue Card certification—a system for communicating paths and objectives for incident commanders. The district



**Above:** Former TLMFPD Fire Chief Chris Truty receives a plaque presented by firefighter Matt Godson on behalf of Local 4319 on Jan. 4 at Station 1. Also, board President John Hildebrandt presented Truty with a Michael Garman firefighter sculpture from the Board of Directors. Truty retired in December 2020 after serving 41 years in fire service and seven years as fire chief at TLMFPD. *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*

has three instructors to help certify in the region.

- Efforts continue to coordinate joint training with Palmer Lake Fire Department.

#### COVID-19 staff vaccine update

Deputy Chief Randy Trost said the COVID-19 vaccine program is voluntary and staff members make known their own desire to be vaccinated. The district does not have specific numbers on how many personnel have already received the vaccination.

UC Health is collecting data to identify adverse vaccine reactions, said Division Chief of Training Jonathan Bradley.

Bradley said an informal survey conducted in mid-January communicated to all the Colorado fire agencies showed about 50% participation with the COVID-19 vaccine for both firefighters and EMS, and that same percentage is reflected nationwide. There are still a lot of questions about the vaccinations and their benefits and a lot of data needs to be collected about the efficacy rate of the vaccination, Bradley said. That may create additional compliance, he said.

#### Service awards and "Chief's coin" 2020 recipient recognition

Kovacs recognized the following staff members for their tenure of service with TLMFPD:

- Fifteen years of service: Tony Tafoya, Mike Rauenzahn, Jody Thorpe, and Keegan Black.
- Ten years of service: Steve Peters.
- Five years of service: Braden Stoenner, Derek Thorne, and Keith Barker.

Kovacs said, "The proudest moments and most enjoyable duties the fire chief can have is to recognize employees that have contributed to the success of the organization for a long time, and to give recognition to folks doing amazing things under extraordinary circumstances." Kovacs announced the following 2020 recognition awards:

- Paramedic Stephanie Soll and firefighter Christian Schmidt were formally recognized for a professional pregnancy emergency response in July 2020 involving a birth of twins with severe complications. "Credit is duly deserved for keeping both babies and mother healthy," said Kovacs.
- "Firefighter of the year" was awarded to firefighter Jay Bruchis, who is enrolled in the paramedic recruit academy and was recognized by his peers

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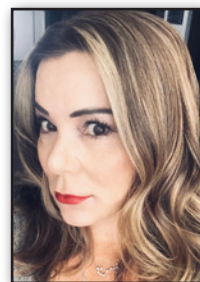
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**Above:** Carolyn Kovacs pins on the badge of office for TLMFPD's new Fire Chief Andy Kovacs after the swearing-in ceremony on Jan. 4 at Station 1. Board President John Hildebrandt administered the oath. Kovacs was the deputy fire chief for the Brighton Fire Rescue District in Colorado from 2019, and before that was with the Orange County Fire Authority in California for 29 years, where he was promoted through the ranks from firefighter/paramedic to division chief. *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*

for all of his hard work during 2020, getting things accomplished specific to EMS.

- Firefighter Matt Godson was nominated by Battalion Chief Kris Mola for organizing a two-day extrication class in October 2020.

**Financial report**

Treasurer Jason Buckingham presented the estimated end-of-year summary as of Dec. 31, 2020, including:

- Property taxes received for 2020 were \$9.09 million, representing 99% of the projected revenue of \$9.12 million.
- Specific Ownership Taxes received for 2020 were \$997,976, an overage of \$123,000 or about 14% above the

projected revenue.

- Ambulance revenues for 2020 were \$792,569. The projected revenue was \$800,000.
- Impact fees were \$158,508; \$8,508 or 5% over the expected revenue.

Expenses for 2020 were \$8.46 million of the \$9.34 million or 90.5% of the predicted annual budget. This resulted in a savings of \$882,019.

Overall, the revenue for the year 2020 was \$11.38 million. This was about \$51,000 more than anticipated in the projected 2020 budget.

Kovacs said he would take a look at the approved 2021 budget before the next regular board meeting to see where the surplus revenue should go in the 2021 budget.

The district made 23 electronic payments in December with three larger payments: \$77,776 for an engine payment, \$20,659 for new radio/light packages on three administrative vehicles, and \$8,389 for new fitness equipment. All were appropriate and within budget.

The board accepted the financial report as presented, 7-0.

**Station 1 remodel**

Kovacs said Division Chief of Logistics Dean Wahl has been meeting with D2C and Mark Young Construction every Friday, and groundbreaking for the Station 1 remodel is scheduled for May. *See [www.ocn.me/v19n9.htm#tlmfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v19n9.htm#tlmfpd).*

Wahl answered multiple questions from Secretary Mike Smaldino as follows:

- The plan has been dramatically revised due to TLMFPD's acquisition of 15 acres in 2020.
- The current budget is \$1.7 million, and he is trying to remain within that budget, however, an upgrade to the gas service is required.

**Wildfire risk reduction**

Kovacs said Division Chief of Community Risk Jamey Bumgarner has entered the 2020 community chipping project information into the International Asso-

ciation of Fire Chiefs database, and discussions have begun for the 2021 chipping season.

District resident Lisa Hatfield announced a free Wildfire Risk Reduction Program and encouraged individuals or neighborhoods who want to get organized and get custom advice on how to be more "firewise" to join the kick-off information meeting on Saturday, Feb. 27. For more information and the Zoom link, contact [epg@tlumc.org](mailto:epg@tlumc.org) or call 719-339-7831, or see the Special Events Calendar on page 31.

The meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday of each month. The next regular meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Feb. 24 at TLMFPD Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. For information on Zoom meeting joining instructions and upcoming agendas, visit [www.tlmfire.org/board](http://www.tlmfire.org/board) or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

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

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**MONUMENT (Cont. from 1)**

It was unclear whether Clark was referring to general bidding for town projects or just those for public works water-related projects. The town approved nine engineering firms that are qualified to receive bids and do the work.

The last water project approved for the evening was for emergency work that has already taken place. Public Works crews realized Well 8 was having production flow issues. At the same time Well 7 had been taken out of service and Well 9 was shut down to fix radium issues. Town Manager Mike Foreman authorized emergency work to be done to replace a portion of the discharging pipe at Well 8. Applied Ingenuity LLC completed the work and received the unanimously approved payment of \$38,421.

**Planning Commissioner  
Joshua Thomas reappointed**

The appointment for current Planning Commissioner Joshua Thomas expired at the end of 2020. The board reappointed him and appointed Ray Egle to the Board of Adjustments.

The Board of Adjustments (BOA) is a volunteer board that meets as needed to hear and rule on zoning regulation variances. The BOA should have one member of the BOT, but no one was appointed since Trustee Jeffrey Bornstein left office, creating a vacancy. The board directed Planner Debbie Flynn to appoint someone from the BOT to the BOA. Clark asked to be considered for the position. The application is at [townofmonument.org](http://townofmonument.org).

**MONUMENT (Cont. on 9)**

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# D38 LEADERSHIP:

We are now 10.5 months into a global health pandemic that is unprecedented in modern times. There was no playbook, but since the beginning you worked tirelessly on behalf of our kids. You followed national, state, and local health guidance and requirements. You surveyed faculty and staff, parents, and community members, listened to countless calls, read hundreds of emails, and heard testimony at School Board meetings. In the midst of a raging pandemic, you found multiple ways to provide an education for our children while ensuring the health and safety of students, teachers, and staff.

Please hear us loud and clear: **THANK YOU!**

# D38 TEACHERS, STAFF, AND EMPLOYEES:

Almost overnight, you re-imagined your entire profession. You created new ways to deliver instruction and simultaneously teach students both in-person and online, amid sudden quarantines of students and yourselves. Thank you for your unending commitment and dedication to our kids and our community. Thank you for sticking with this monumental task despite a lack of appreciation for and recognition of the circumstances you’ve endured from some. We understand in order to have our kids safely in classrooms, we all bear the responsibility of wearing masks, socially distancing, avoiding gatherings, and washing our hands often. We know that you deserve a safe work environment with these science-based safety measures in place. We also know this isn't what you signed up for and that you stay because you care. We appreciate all you have done to continue to teach our children during these trying times.

Please hear us loud and clear: **THANK YOU!**

Signed,  
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<i>Rachel Ainsley</i> <i>Terrie Antosh</i> <i>Cory Antosh</i> <i>Arnett Arnett</i> <i>Andrea Artley</i> <i>David Artley</i> <i>Sophie Artley</i> <i>Elisabeth Artley</i> <i>Sarah Atwell</i> <i>Ian Atwell</i> <i>Sara Balthazor</i> <i>Carolyn Bedingfield</i> <i>Brent Bedingfield</i> <i>Claudette Bedingfield</i> <i>Miki, Garrett, Hunter and Koa Best</i> <i>Dave and Barb Betzler</i> <i>The Bilbrey Family</i> <i>The Blehm Family</i> <i>Rob and Karen Bluemel</i> <i>Andrew Bluemel</i> <i>David Book</i> <i>Dwight and Heather Bowman</i> <i>Jim and Tracey Brainard</i> <i>Brenda Brondum</i> <i>Jackie Burhans</i> <i>Vicky Burnett</i> <i>Brendan Burns</i> <i>Chris Carroll</i> <i>Deirdre Carroll</i> <i>Louisa Carscadden (retired public school teacher)</i> <i>Dan Carscadden (retired public school teacher)</i> <i>Drew and Jenny Cavin, and family</i> <i>A former student of D38</i> <i>Matt, Valerie, Logan, Leigha and Noah Daly</i> <i>Karin De Angelis, Ph.D.</i> <i>Jodi Delnickas</i> <i>Anna Dickey</i> <i>Allison D'Lauro, DPT</i> <i>Christopher D'Lauro, Ph.D.</i> <i>Byheir Douglas</i> <i>Tyana Douglas</i> <i>Tineasia Duke</i> <i>Ashton E.</i> <i>Daniel Engelman</i> <i>Cylinda Engelman</i> <i>Erin Engler</i> <i>Karl and April Falk</i> <i>Marilyn Falk</i> <i>Jackson Ferguson</i> <i>JP Feve</i> <i>Anne Feve</i> <i>Emma E. Fisher</i> <i>Paulette Follett</i> <i>Michelle Glover</i>	<i>Andy and Katie Gress</i> <i>The Grundel Family</i> <i>Eric M. Gustafson</i> <i>The Halaby Family</i> <i>Karen Harvey</i> <i>Karen Heater</i> <i>Lorna Horton</i> <i>James Howald</i> <i>Jasper Howald</i> <i>Amelia Iannetta</i> <i>Terri Inloes</i> <i>Heather Jacobson, parent, spouse of a teacher, and community member</i> <i>Rachel Jameson</i> <i>Doug Jameson</i> <i>Reid and Angie Jones</i> <i>Wendy, Jeff, Riley and Nate Jones</i> <i>Melissa Kavanaugh</i> <i>Julie Keim</i> <i>Kelly Kempf-Mobley</i> <i>Shawna Knight</i> <i>Cameron Knight</i> <i>Terry and Wendy Ladau</i> <i>Robert, Wendy, Laura, Kurt and Erich Lambrech</i> <i>Joan Landrum</i> <i>Lindsay</i> <i>Denise Lee</i> <i>David Lee</i> <i>Rachelle Lesteshen</i> <i>Darin and Karen Lewandowski</i> <i>Holly Longenbach</i> <i>Mike Longenbach</i> <i>Claudia Lyon</i> <i>Jenn Magee</i> <i>B. Makofske</i> <i>Andrew Marsh</i> <i>Misty Marsh</i> <i>Team Martin, Matt, Karrah, Kathryn, Andrew, Allisyn, and Madelyn</i> <i>Colette Martin</i> <i>Jenny McCabe</i> <i>Biff McCabe</i> <i>Shayne McCormick</i> <i>Lindsey McCormick</i> <i>Jennifer McCullough</i> <i>The McFadden Family</i> <i>The McNally Family</i> <i>The Meggett Family</i> <i>Julie Menke</i> <i>Greg and Karen Meyers</i> <i>Virginia Monroe</i> <i>Shannon Nelson</i> <i>The Odette Family</i> <i>The Okerson Family</i>	<i>Mike and Amy Paschal</i> <i>Eric Paulik</i> <i>Lance Pearce</i> <i>Craig Peltier</i> <i>Jennifer Peltier</i> <i>Meghan Pemberton</i> <i>Robert Pemberton</i> <i>Eric and Terri Peterson</i> <i>Arin Peterson</i> <i>Tyler Phillips</i> <i>Robb Pike</i> <i>Lisa Pike</i> <i>The Pillmore Family</i> <i>Nathan and April Pritchard</i> <i>The Rhinesmith Family</i> <i>Brad Robenstein</i> <i>Michael Rowe</i> <i>Shannon Rowe</i> <i>Mike, Amy, and Colin (6th grade) Saber</i> <i>Robert Sample</i> <i>Michele Sample</i> <i>Amy Savage</i> <i>Ben Savage</i> <i>Karen and Brian Schade</i> <i>Kendall Schade</i> <i>Connie Schmidt</i> <i>The Shertzer Family</i> <i>Stuart and Susan Smith</i> <i>Whitney, Shawn, Ayden, Tatum and Emily Snow</i> <i>Crystal Starkey</i> <i>Deanna Telles</i> <i>Quentin Terkildsen</i> <i>Jennifer Terkildsen</i> <i>Jamie Thompson</i> <i>Stephen Thompson</i> <i>Vicki Trujillo</i> <i>Maddy Trujillo</i> <i>Dustin J. Tupper</i> <i>The Volk and Mitchell Family</i> <i>Julie and Steve Wagnon</i> <i>Steve Waldmann</i> <i>Liz Warnken</i> <i>Erik Warnken</i> <i>Zakary Watson</i> <i>Zoe Watson Meireles</i> <i>Peggy Watt</i> <i>Deb Wible</i> <i>Cathy Wilcox</i> <i>Rich Wilcox</i> <i>Dean Williams</i> <i>Avery Wilson</i> <i>Tracie Woods</i> <i>The Zeidman Family</i>
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**MONUMENT  
(Cont. from 7)**

**Multi-jurisdictional  
hazard mitigation plan  
update approved**

Tharnish asked the board to approve the Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management (PPROEM) Hazard Mitigation Plan. The intent of the plan is to protect people and property from hazardous events caused by nature or humans. The update is an improvement of mitigation strategies based upon past disasters, risk assessments, and the impact to the community. It was prepared in accordance with FEMA requirements. The document can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/ytyw8hlo>.

To be eligible for some federal grants, including the Stafford Act fire mitigation and hazard mitigation grants, this plan must be approved every five years. Assistant to the Town Manager Erica Romero represented the town and spoke during tonight's meeting. Romero confirmed that although the plan mentions pandemic measures, there will be a separate pandemic/epidemic plan prepared and distributed shortly. Romero said the biggest changes to the document involve linking the town's website to emergency management sites. She also said an evacuation plan will be drafted in the future. Tharnish said his biggest fear is a fire coming up and over Mt. Herman and into the town.

Trustee Ron Stephens was

concerned the plan might negate the resolution the board passed during its Jan. 11 meeting regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Though it has no legal standing, resolution 08-2021 states, "The board of trustees does not support COVID restrictions that would shut down businesses in the town of Monument."

Some of the objectives identified for improvement include:

- Improve existing emergency notification systems for reliability and redundancy.
- Facilitate and ensure communities and businesses have actionable emergency operations plans and continuity of operations plans.
- Improve community education programs to increase awareness of hazards and mitigation opportunities.
- Establish and improve information sharing between all the various jurisdictions.

The plan was approved 6-0.

**Public comments**

Resident Jeff Lewis said, "Kudos to the Monument Board of Trustees for listening to the community," regarding the recent COVID-19 resolution it passed. He said businesses and the public should decide for themselves how to handle the pandemic. Lewis suggested there are many more COVID-19 cases than are being listed on government websites, proposing people who are infected

recover on their own without making their situation public.

**Bidding process  
discussion**

Clark asked the board to reconsider portions of the town's purchasing policy so that more businesses can be a part of the bidding process. Although the policy was just updated and approved at the Aug. 17 board meeting, she asked specifically about the requirement to select the lowest bidder. My "personal experience [is] that the lowest bid and highest bid are sometimes not the best bids to take all the time," she said.

The policy requires competitive bidding if the cost of the project is \$5,000 or more. Foreman reminded the board the town is not required to select the lowest bid as Clark was suggesting, saying, "We always go with

the highest qualified lowest bid." The policy reads, "The Town also reserves the right to select the lowest and/or best bidder as determined by the town in its sole discretion."

The meeting adjourned 7:52 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Monument Board of Trustees usually meets at 6:30 p.m. on the first and third Mondays of each month at Monument Town Hall, 645 Beacon Lite Road. The

next regular meeting is scheduled for Feb. 16. Call 719-884-8014 or see [www.townofmonument.org](http://www.townofmonument.org) for information. To see upcoming agendas and complete board packets for BOT or to download audio recordings of past meetings, see <http://monumenttownco.minutesonline.com> and click on Board of Trustees.

Allison Robenstein  
can be reached at  
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- Consistent family and community support and encouragement shared
- Grace Best facility master plan work initiated
- Holiday compensation for D38 staff provided
- Deferred maintenance projects plan developed
- Monument Academy partnership strengthened
- D38's Strategic Plan guided the year's work

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**RESOLUTION  
(Cont. from 1)**

cluding law enforcement and fire prevention and response.

- Critical government services.

Trustee Ron Stephens said the idea that one business is essential and another not is discriminatory, noting that when he watches football none of the players in the huddle is wearing a mask. "If they can do it for a football team, they can do it for businesses," he said. It all comes down to individual responsibility, said Stephens. He said the board is not asking residents

to ignore CDC guidelines.

Mayor Don Wilson steered the board away from the "sanctuary city" terminology used during the Dec. 7 meeting because the state, not the town, holds business and liquor licenses. He said the town has no way of stopping the state from coming in and removing local businesses' licenses if they are not following restrictions. See [www.ocn.me/v21n1.htm#mbot](http://www.ocn.me/v21n1.htm#mbot).

Typically, the public is not allowed to make comments during a workshop, but the board made an exception this time. Members of the public, including

Danny Briscoe, Terri Hayes, Julian and Linda Drummond, Megan Davis, Susan Dewey, and Steven Phillips, spoke in favor of the resolution. Linda Drummond noted everyone is essential, saying the news and the government are brain-washing residents.

During the regular meeting, Ryan LaVier, Patricia Graham, Scott Weiser, Mary York, Kim Green, Scott Dontaville, and Linda Price made public comments.

Commissioner Holly Williams said the El Paso Board of County Commissioners is in favor of the resolution and will not hold back any funding that be-

comes available for economic relief.

Ultimately, the board approved a resolution "reasserting the rights of the Town of Monument and its residents and condemning the unconstitutional limitations imposed upon their freedoms by the governor of Colorado." *The full resolution may be read at <https://monument-townco.documents-on-demand.com/>*

The meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

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**Monument Board of Trustees, Jan.4**

**UPS distribution center; water-related projects**

*By Allison Robenstein*

During the Jan. 4 Monument Board of Trustees (BOT) meeting, the board passed several land use resolutions. The annual animal services contract with the Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region (HSPPR) was approved, too.

**Water-related projects approved**

Three water-related project addendums were approved for existing contracts. Public Works Director Tom Tharnish asked the board to approve an addendum to the contract with Forsgren Associates for the new 2-million-gallon water

tank and 2 miles of associated pipe.

The town currently has a 1-million-gallon water tank. The new tank was originally approved at the Aug. 3 board meeting. See [www.ocn.me/v20n9.htm#mbot](http://www.ocn.me/v20n9.htm#mbot).

Tharnish said because there have been significant changes to the pipe routes, more money is required. Water line routes have been an issue for as long as Tharnish has been discussing the tank location north of Monument Lake Road. The town had been in litigation over the land in the past and any new easement requirements could land them in judicial

jeopardy again. Two 12-inch water lines will be installed, one as a supply line and other for returns.

This is one of the many projects approved within the \$22 million bond the board approved in 2020. See Vol. 20 No. 10 - October 3, 2020 ([ocn.me](http://ocn.me)). The request adds \$233,350 to the design and engineering portion of the \$5 million project. It was approved 6-1 with Trustee Laurie Clark voting against.

Tharnish asked the board to approve another addendum to a Forsgren contract for the Raspberry Lane distribution

system redesign. Tharnish reminded the board this area of the town sees numerous water main breaks. Staff has determined Raspberry Lane itself needs to be fully rebuilt now rather than waiting for replacement in the five-year replacement plan.

A total of \$53,460 will be used to replace the water line, the roadway, and the concrete curb. The project will be renamed "Raspberry Lane Street and Waterline Improvements Project". Clark opposed the project, but all the other trustees voted in favor.

Finally, although the radium removal process is moving forward for Well 9, a building issue needs to be addressed in Treatment Plant 3/9, which is being expanded. The 1,110-square-foot expansion includes an 800-square-foot expansion of the adjacent building's lab and office space. Specifically, a pre-engineered metal building will be considered as an option to the expansion. The project is expected to be completed in December.

The radium removal project was approved at the April 6 meeting. See [www.ocn.me/v20n5.htm#mbot0406](http://www.ocn.me/v20n5.htm#mbot0406). The expansion project was approved at the Oct. 19 meeting. See [tinyurl.com/1shl6l62](http://tinyurl.com/1shl6l62).

Although the request passed, both Clark and Trustee Jamy Unruh voted against. Neither provided reasons.

**Sanctuary Pointe  
Final Plat Filing No. 8**

The final plat of Sanctuary Pointe in Phase 3 is 45.551 acres consisting of 27 single-family lots. Pocket parks and open space make up 61.93% of the acreage. These will be maintained by Triview Metropolitan District.

The Monument Planning Commission recommended approval of the plat at its Dec. 9 meeting. See [www.ocn.me/v21n1.htm#mpc](http://www.ocn.me/v21n1.htm#mpc).

Trustee Ron Stephens was concerned about traffic, noting the issue has come up with residents in the past. Planner Debbie Flynn confirmed there are two egress roads the residents can use and one that is locked and can be used by the Fire Department. Sanctuary Rim Drive connects to the now extended Gleneagle Drive. Both end at Baptist Road. Town Manager Mike Foreman reminded the board that Gleneagle Drive couldn't be extended to Higby until improvements were done to the county-owned road.

The ordinance was approved unanimously.

**UPS center approved**

A new United Parcel Service (UPS) Distribution Center will be coming to Monument. Located on 16.91 acres of Falcon Commerce Center Phase 1, the site will employ 150 people. Forest Lakes Metropolitan District will supply water and wastewater service. The 98,290-square-foot building will be used for warehousing and administration. Trucks will access the site from Squadron Drive. Eventually, Woodcarver Road will be improved and be annexed into the town for UPS use at that point.

The Planning Commission approved the request unanimously on Dec. 9. Several members of the public spoke during the public hearing portion. Susan Vella



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confirmed no Santa Fe Trail access will be impacted. Elizabeth Sperling was concerned about light pollution. Flynn said the lights would either be facing down or turned off at night.

UPS representative Sergio Enriquez said the distribution site is one of many in the state.

The request was unanimously approved.

Animal control codes adopted in sync with county and other local municipalities

The Monument Police Department and the HSPPR requested an update to the town’s animal control codes and fee schedule to bring them in line with other local towns.

In past years, the board simply adopted a version of the El Paso County Animal Rules, but this has created difficulties with prosecution and restitution.

Town Attorney Andrew Richie confirmed the Monument police enforce the codes and determine if an animal is dangerous based upon its actions, not the breed.

Richie said animal code violations make up a substantial portion of the town’s monthly court docket. According to the new ordinance, a first offense for a missing dog license is \$45. A dangerous dog first offense is \$75 but will go up to \$150 after three or more offenses. Chickens are allowed only in R-1 and R-2 districts and must be kept in a backyard coop.

The ordinance was approved 6-1. Wilson voted against the request with no reason given.

Public comments

Several residents made comments regarding the sale of Kratom in the town limits, including Mac Haddow, Beth Fisher, and Wendy Pardue. The board approved a temporary moratorium on the sale of Kratom during the May 20, 2019 meeting and then banned the sale entirely during the Nov. 18, 2019 meeting. See Vol. 19 No. 12 - December 7, 2019 (ocn.me).

Chad Dewey and William Benefield supported opening all businesses that have been closed due to the pandemic.

Lindsey Leite said the state’s five-star program is too onerous for businesses. The five-star program is a voluntary county-led program. An administrative committee oversees the program. According to the program documentation, “It encourages businesses to implement safety measures beyond what is already required by public health orders and guidelines that will help slow the spread

of COVID-19. In doing so, businesses will be able to accelerate their reopening.” For more information, see 5 Star State Certification Program | Colorado COVID-19 Updates.

The meeting adjourned at 9:26 p.m.  
Allison Robenstein  
may be contacted at  
allisonrobenstein@ocn.me

Monument Planning Commission, Jan. 13

New chair and vice chair for PC; Gleneagle Dental relocation plan approved

By Kate Pangelinan

The Jan. 13 Monument Planning Commission (PC) meeting saw the yearly vote for chairman and vice chairman, during which Chris Wilhelmi agreed to an appointment as the new PC chairman and Sean White took on the role of vice chairman. Commissioners Eric Light, Steve King, Martin Trujillo, and Bill Lewis were also in attendance.

Following the three scheduled Public Hearings and Recommendations, Planner Debbie Flynn reported on the status of recent Santa Fe Trail discussions, explaining that El Paso County is still deliberating how to move forward. The county will decide whether to keep the trail where it is or reroute it, which would mean relocating either some or all of the trail. This choice isn’t Monument’s to make—the county will decide and then let everyone else know.

Further information about all projects discussed by the PC can be found in the meeting packets located at monumenttownco.documents-on-demand.com. This site is also a good resource for accessing approved meeting minutes as well as the agendas for upcoming meetings. This latest PC meeting, along with many older ones, can be found recorded on the Town of Monument’s YouTube channel at youtube.com/channel/UCd-FL08UcqZfFdkio5JT6GDA. Citizens may find it easier to search for “Town of Monument” or “Monument Planning Commission” in YouTube’s search bar.

The first section of this latest PC meeting failed to record due to technical difficulties, as stated in the YouTube video’s description. If citizens have any questions or concerns, they are encouraged to “please reach out to planning staff.”

According to the town’s website, planning staff can be contacted by calling 719-481-2954 or sending an email to planning@tomgov.org.

Native Sun Construction annexation and zoning

Some facts about this development, referencing the meeting packet:

- The Native Sun Construction property is on Woodcarver Road, south of Baptist Road and “adjacent to the southwest boundary of the town and the approved Falcon Commerce Center Phase 1 Preliminary PD Site Plan.” This is a 10.69-acre plot of land. Native Sun Construction is looking to have this area annexed by Monument and zoned to Planned Development.

nexed by Monument and zoned to Planned Development.

- Part of Woodcarver Road is included in this space, and its status is “being handled through an agreement between adjacent owners/users and the town.” It’s expected to be dedicated to Monument.
- The Board of Trustees (BOT) has already decided that “the submittal of the annexation petition and basic requirement of contiguity to the existing Town limits have been met.” At the Feb. 16 BOT meeting, a resolution will be voted on that could lead to a movement to annex this property on March 1. Those more specific dates are indicated in a list of ongoing projects on the town’s website at http://www.townofmonument.org/235/Projects-Around-Town. The PC’s thoughts and recommendation verdict will be taken into consideration at the Feb. 16

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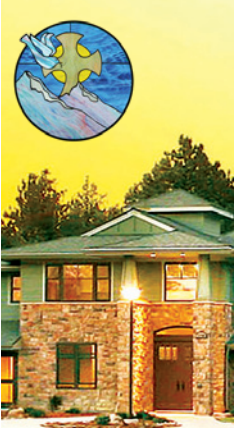
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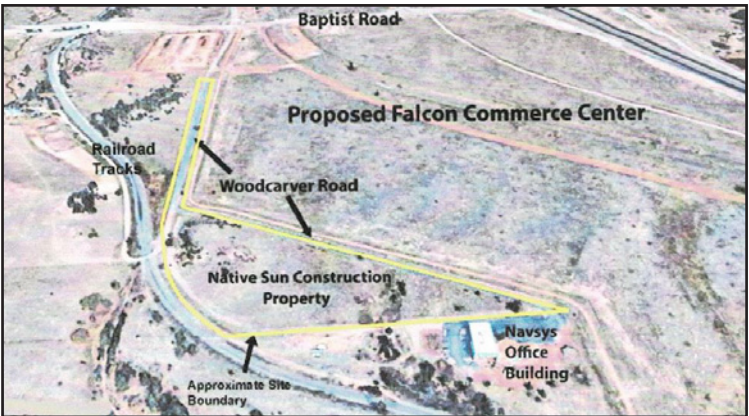
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- meeting.
  - A thorough explanation of this proposal, including photographs and maps, is available in the meeting packet.
  - “Native Sun Construction Inc.” is listed as the applicant, and the property owner is “Native Sun Materials Inc.”
- Flynn informed *OCN* that the PC vote to approve this proposal for recommendation passed

unanimously, 6-0.

### Gleneagle Dental Preliminary/Final PD Site Plan

Some facts about this development, referencing Flynn’s presentation, the meeting packet, and statements from Bruce Barr of Art C. Klein Construction, representing the applicant:

- This project is to be built on Lot 13 of the Monument Ridge development, which comprises .709 acre. It will be a 3,186-square-foot, single-story dental office. The site’s address is 925 W. Baptist Road. The future Monument Ridge apartments are expected to be nearby.
- Gleneagle Dental is a current dental practice belonging to Dr. Michael Wonnacott, DDS. This is a relocation of his practice.
- Pictures of the proposed dental office, as well as detailed plans outlining its features, are available in the meeting packet.
- The dental office’s hours will be Monday through Thursday from 8 to 4.
- The four existing access points into this development aren’t expected to change: There are two along Baptist Road and two along Struthers Road. Eighteen total parking spaces will be provided for the dental office.
- The property owner is listed as “Ellsworth LLC (Ed Ellsworth)” in the meeting packet. The applicant is

listed as “Art C Klein Construction (Bruce W Barr).” Nobody spoke during the designated Public Comment period. After PC questions were addressed, a motion to approve recommendation of this proposal passed unanimously, 6-0. The project will now be reviewed by the Board of Trustees on Feb. 1 with the PC’s blessing.

### Village at Jackson Creek Preliminary PD Site Plan and Rezone

Some facts about this development, referencing Flynn’s presentation, the meeting packet, and statements from Brett Behnke representing Creekside Developers Inc.:

- This project involves almost 47 acres of space between I-25 and Jackson Creek Parkway. It’s close to Jackson Creek Senior Living and the local Walmart. There is some Preble’s meadow jumping mouse designated habitat space to the north and wetlands to the south.
- This land is currently zoned for Planned Industrial Development (PID), but the applicant would prefer to rezone it to Planned Development (PD) and establish a mixed-use development. Currently, the area is not zoned to allow for residential development at all.
- The applicant’s hope would be to transform this into a “Live/Work/Play” community, featuring multi-family housing, retail, and other employment oppor-



- tunities. Some of the things the applicant would like to be permitted on this land include multi-family and senior housing, brew pubs, and distilleries. “Gathering spaces” are important to the applicant: Hopes were expressed to include a Pikes Peak Library District location and a senior center in time. Listed influences in Behnke’s presentation included Festival Park in Castle Rock and the Denver Public Library.
- The applicant is listed as “Creekside Developers Inc. (Brett Behnke)” in the meeting packet, and the property owner is “Jackson Creek Land Company, LLC (Rob Oldach).”

No citizens spoke during the Public Comment period. Some issues expressed by members of the PC included the maximum allowed height through this development, which would be 90 feet, and the proposed allowance of 32 units per acre. Questions were also raised about what might happen if there isn’t a significant demand for retail in the area. The designs were

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complimented but deemed too urban for Monument’s community by Wilhelmi and White. King stated that he believes the project “needs to go back to the drawing board.” Behnke asked if he could be allowed to respond, expressing that he hopes the project will be reconsidered. He understands why PC members

would be opposed to the maximum allowable height, but he hopes they can also see the appeal of the development. In the end, a movement to recommend the project for denial was approved 5-1, with Lewis voting against. Reasons listed for this denial involved the development’s “failure to

comply with or meaningfully consider the town of Monument’s Comprehensive Plan,” with mentions of density, aesthetics, and quality of life in the surrounding areas. This proposal will go on to be considered by the Board of Trustees on Feb. 1. \*\*\*\*\* For the time being, the public

will be able to attend PC meetings through Webex software. Citizens are also afforded the option of calling in to listen to meetings, and if alternate accommodations are needed, the town website states, “Individuals without the ability to participate by phone or computer may contact Drew Anderson at

danderson@tomgov.org or 719-396-0842.” Further information: <http://www.townofmonument.org/meetings/>. The next PC meeting is expected to be held on Feb. 10. Kate Pangelinan can be reached at [katepangelinan@ocn.me](mailto:katepangelinan@ocn.me).

Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, Jan. 14 and 28

New leadership addresses old problem: water

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans The Palmer Lake Board of Trustees (PLBOT) met three times in January. Regular meetings were held on Jan. 14 and Jan. 28, and a workshop was also held on Jan. 28. At the Jan. 14 regular meeting, Trustee Bob Mutu resigned his seat on the board and received a certificate of appreciation from Mayor Bill Bass. The board handled housekeeping issues, some via the consent agenda and some as separate resolutions or ordinances. The board also granted a new business license and heard reports from staff and trustees.

At the Jan. 28 workshop, attention turned to issues relating to water, beginning with a presentation from GMS Inc. Consulting Engineers (GMS) on the town’s water infrastructure, water supply, and water rights. Town Administrator Dawn Collins discussed the town’s policies on residential wells, water taps, and planned water rate increases. The workshop ended with a plea from a property owner who asked for clarity on his application for a water tap.

At the Jan. 28 regular meeting, which convened immediately after the workshop, the discussion of water issues continued. The moratorium on water taps, the policy on taps purchased but not used within 12 months, billing issues, and future water supply were discussed. The board voted on fire restriction and social media policy, and on two business licenses.

Trustee Mutu honored Mutu was appointed to the board on May 12, 2016. As a younger man, he served in the Air Force and was the chief electrician for Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station. While on the board, Mutu also served on the Parks Commission.

At the Jan. 14 meeting, he told the board he was struggling with the requirements of trusteeship due to issues with his hearing.


Bass thanked Mutu for his service to the town and presented him with a certificate of appreciation honoring his time on the board.

Later in the meeting, the board passed Resolution 9-2021, which declared Mutu’s seat on the board to be vacant and authorized the board to move forward with an appointment to fill the seat. Interested applicants must apply by 5 p.m. Feb. 1, 2021.

Policies, appointments handled by resolutions The consent agenda passed at the Jan. 14 meeting contained the following resolutions: • Resolution 1-2021 estab-

- lished the Town Hall at 42 Valley Crescent and the Palmer Lake Post Office at Highway 105 as the official posting places for notices of public meetings.
- Resolution 2-2021 appointed Kirk Noll, Mike Pietsch, Reid Wiecks, Ande Furrer, and Greg Feuerhaken to the Parks Commission.
- Resolution 3-2021 appointed Amy Hutson, Mark Bruce, Charlie Ihlenfeld, Bill Fisher, David Cooper, and Vic Brown to the Planning Commission.
- Resolution 4-2021 appointed Kurt Ehrhardt, Charlie Ihlenfeld, Ed Kinney, Bob Miner, Glant Havenar and Michael Richards to the Board of Adjustment.
- Resolution 5-2021 appointed Dawn Collins as town clerk and treasurer, Matthew Krob as town attor-


ney, John Ciccolella as municipal judge, Toni Vega as clerk of Municipal Court, and Jason Vanderpool as police chief. • Resolution 6-2021 amended the electronic sign policy to prohibit posting material on or near the sign. Vacation and replat approved Havenar recused herself from a public hearing and vote on Ordinance 18-2020, which would vacate and replat a property at 93 Hermosa Ave. Collins told the board the vacation and replat had been discussed by the previous board and recommended by the Planning Commission. The ordinance before the board would require the property owners, Palmer Lake Fire Chief Christopher McCarthy and town staff to develop a turnaround for firetrucks on Hermosa Avenue.



The  
*Palmer Lake  
Historical Society*

would like to thank our members, volunteers and calendar advertisers for their support in this difficult time. We plan to resume our free monthly local history programs and events as soon as conditions permit. New displays at the **Vaile Museum** are nearly complete while work continues on the restoration of many artifacts. We gratefully commend the volunteer staff at **OCN** for their work in keeping residents of the Palmer Divide area informed of local events. Watch the PL bridge for our new red caboosel! The 2021 PLHS calendar is now available at many local merchants. If you would like to join or learn more about the PLHS please visit us at: [www.PalmerDivideHistory.org](http://www.PalmerDivideHistory.org) or follow us on Facebook [@PalmerLakeHistory](https://www.facebook.com/PalmerLakeHistory).

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At a meeting of the Planning Commission, McCarthy had recommended a 96-foot diameter cul de sac abutting an existing hydrant. Collins said the ordinance would create a total of three lots.

The board voted unanimously to approve the ordinance.

#### Minor subdivision approved

Collins also told the board the background of Resolution 8-2021, which would create one lot from lots 12, 13 and 14 on the property owned by Tyler and Sara Woodward at 205 South Valley Road. The resolution would move the property line to create the required 7.5-foot setback from an existing structure, Collins said.

The board voted unanimously to approve the resolution.

#### Green & Associates continues as town auditor

The board voted unanimously at the Jan. 14 board meeting to approve Resolution 7-2021, which authorizes the mayor to sign a letter of understanding with Green & Associates LLC to establish audit services for an amount not to exceed \$14,600. Green and Associates has served as the town's auditor for several years.

#### New business license granted

Rich Caldwell told the board at the Jan. 14 meeting he had purchased the property at 201 Pinecrest Way, which had previously been the Pinecrest Lodge, intending to open a group home for intellectually or developmentally disabled adults. Caldwell said the nonprofit group home would be called Hilltop Ranch.

The board voted unanimously to approve Caldwell's request for a business license.

#### Consultant reviews water wells, supply, rights, and taps

At the Jan. 28 workshop, David Frisch, of GMS, gave the board an overview of sev-

eral water-related issues affecting Palmer Lake.

Frisch began with his history with Palmer Lake, saying GMS provided the town with engineering services in the 1980s through 1991. In 1989, GMS resurfaced the dam at one of the town's reservoirs. Frisch lives in Palmer Lake and has a vested interest in the town's well-being, he told the board.

Frisch reviewed a large map GMS had done of the town's water infrastructure that documented the water transmission lines. He explained the town uses two types of water—surface and ground—and pointed out that 60% of the town's water is surface water, with the remainder provided by wells that draw from the Denver Basin aquifer.

Frisch said a 1985 ordinance defines the town's boundaries, and the town owns all the water rights within those boundaries. Residential wells within the town limits typically draw from the Dawson aquifer, he said. Frisch told the board the town had "a lot of water rights."

Trustee Karen Stuth asked Frisch if the town had enough drinking water and how long the supply could be expected to last. Frisch said he believed the town had adequate water at present, but an accounting by a water rights engineer would be needed to estimate how long the supply might last. Frisch declined to give an estimate about where the town's water supply might be in five years, saying that depended on the economy and the rate of building.

Frisch told the board that while the town had plenty of water rights, the water infrastructure was minimal, consisting of wells, a treatment plant, storage tanks, and transmission lines.

Trustee Sam Padgett mentioned she had found information indicating the town had 790 water taps in use in 2007.

Frisch wrapped up his presentation

by recommending that the town focus on reducing water loss and improving treatment technology. Town leadership should decide how to handle future requests to subdivide lots, he said.

#### Well and water tap policies discussed

Collins summed up for the current board some issues left unresolved by the previous board. She said the previous board felt it did not have "a good handle" on how water was managed and on how water taps were being provided to property owners requesting them. Collins pointed out that Water Supervisor Steve Orcutt had minimized lost water previously, but water loss was slowly increasing. She said planned development was good news but also a stressor on the water system. As new staff joined the town's administrative team, they became aware of some aspects of water management that needed a closer look. Collins mentioned conservation as an issue the board should consider.

Collins said the town had an ordinance requiring the town to approve wells for residents to whom the town cannot provide water service. She did not believe the process to bring those issues to the board was adequately defined and that the town's ordinances did not clearly define the fees to drill a well.

Collins confirmed Stuth's comment that the town currently had 1,023 water taps in place. Collins said town staff had three applications for water taps in hand and there are another six or seven more that they are aware of. Frisch said that based on previous studies, the estimate was the town had 37 taps available. Collins went on to say taps should be issued for a particular address and that the town's code said any tap not used within 12 months would be deemed abandoned. Collins said that policy had not been followed, perhaps for years, and recommended amending the code or start following it in all cases. She said she was aware of eight taps that had been sold but were not tied to a property or specific plat.

The issue of abandoned taps received further discussion at the regular board meeting that followed the workshop.

#### Planned water rate increases only partially implemented

Collins told the board that a resolu-

tion passed in 2019 had established annual increases in tap fees, monthly base rates, and unit charges that had not been completely implemented. She explained that the money the town had borrowed to build a second storage tank required rate increases totaling 10% overall to be in place. To avoid an uproar, Collins told town staff to hold off on implementing all the rate increases in the 2019 resolution until the new board had a chance to discuss them.

Collins said most water taps were for ¾-inch pipes. One-inch, 1.5-inch, and 2-inch taps should have a higher base charge, but those higher rates were not consistently charged, Collins said.

Paul Banta, who served on the previous board, reminded those present that the town had hired a rate consultant who said the town needed to raise residential rates annually by 3% to 5% to remain in the black. Collins said she would review the consultant's report.

Marc Schuler, who also served on the previous board, said his understanding was the town relied on ground water and the aquifer the town's wells pumped from was dropping 20 feet a year on average. He asked how many years the town's wells would be viable; Orcutt said he could not answer that question.

#### Water tap applicant in limbo

Mike Nelson told the board that he and his wife bought land in the town in 2020 and were assured at the time that water and sewer taps would be available for the home they planned to build. Then he learned there was a moratorium in place, which has been a financial hardship for his family.

"We've been in limbo," Nelson said. He asked the board for consideration for everyone in his position. Bass advised Nelson to complete his application for a water tap. Bass said he was sympathetic to Nelson's dilemma and the town would look for a solution.

Following Nelson's comments, the workshop on water issues was adjourned and the regular board meeting was convened.

#### Exceptions to water tap moratorium considered

At the Jan. 28 regular meeting, Collins asked the board for direction on how to handle water tap requests that had come in while the water tap moratorium is in

PALMER LAKE (Cont. on 16)

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PALMER LAKE (Cont. from 14)

place. She recommended that about 10 outstanding requests should move forward.

Bass said he felt the 10 requests deserved consideration, but since the town only has 37 water taps available, he did not want to remove the moratorium without further study.

Stuth sympathized with those who had followed the town's processes in good faith and said she wanted to do the honorable thing for those applicants. She asked for criteria to evaluate outstanding requests to be developed.

Bob Radosevich, who served previously as the Town Administrator and still assists the town's staff, said he believed there were three sets of building plans in house, and there were five or six more people who had contacted the staff to ask when the moratorium would end. He said the three applicants with a set of plans and a land use permit would be ready to proceed.

Nelson, who spoke at the water workshop, said he did not yet have plans because he was reluctant to pay for them without a guarantee that a water tap would be available.

Local realtor Trish Flake said she had sales under contract contingent on obtaining a water tap.

Stuth made a motion that town staff move the three applications with plans and permits forward and begin working on the next six or seven applications. The board voted unanimously to approve the motion.





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Radosevich told Nelson to pick up a land use permit and he would be considered part of the queue.

Policy on unused water taps debated

At the water workshop, Collins and others commented on a set of eight water taps that had been purchased years ago but never used. The town's municipal code specifies that a tap must be used within 12 months of purchase or it is considered abandoned.

At the Jan. 28 regular meeting, Collins said she recommended that the owners of those taps be given 60 or 90 days to begin using the taps, and if they cannot abide by that timeline, the council may or may not return their tap fee to them, but the monthly charge should not be refunded. In that case perhaps the tap should revert to the town, she said.

John Cressman, who previously served as the town's mayor, said that he purchased three of the taps in question after subdividing the property where he currently lives. He said he owns four more of the taps in question in partnership with Nikki McDonald, who also previously served as mayor. Cressman said that he was shocked to hear the board would consider taking \$50,000 from him. He insisted the taps were not abandoned. He said the four taps owned with McDonald were to be used for a planned development on Greeley Boulevard that was "pretty much ready to go."

In response to a question from Stuth, Cressman said he was mayor when he purchased the taps but was not aware of the deadline to use them.

McDonald said she was not aware of a 12-month limit when she purchased the two taps she owns.

Collins said this situation demonstrated the importance of getting the town's code in order.

Stuth moved to table this discussion until the next regular meeting. Stuth, Trustee Jamie Farr, Bass and Padgett voted to table the discussion; Trustee Nicole Currier voted no.

Attempt to rectify billing tabled

At the Jan. 28 meeting, Collins told the board that a new web-based water billing system was being implemented that would improve accuracy, accessibility, and save staff time. She suggested increasing some charges when the new system is implemented, in particular to



Above: At the Jan. 28 meeting of the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, David Frisch of GMS Inc. Consulting Engineers discusses the town's water infrastructure. Photo by Jackie Burhans.

correct the billing for the different tap sizes. Increased tap fees had been approved by the previous board, but some customers are paying less than the rate mandated by the that board, she said. Collins said although a 3% increase on all rates was approved, she recommended a lower increase.

Collins clarified that the Resolution 4-2019 mandated a 3% annual increase to the monthly base rate, the tap rate, and the unit charge per 1,000 gallons. To date only one of these had been increased. These increases were required to service a loan and would affect everyone who pays a water bill, she said.

Stuth made a motion to table the discussion until the first regular meeting in February, and the board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Future water supply discussion tabled

Collins touched briefly on some issues related to future water supply. She said the board had approved redrilling one of the town's wells and had begun planning for drilling an additional well. She recommended bringing in a geologist to advise the town on the best location to drill and formulating questions for the town's water attorney. Farr moved to table the discussion until the board's second regular meeting in February, and the board voted unanimously in favor.

Fire restriction and social media policies approved

The board voted unanimously to approve Ordinance 1-2021, which mandates the town to follow El Paso County in moving off Stage 2 fire restrictions.

The board also voted unanimously to implement Resolution 11-2021, which establishes social media policies for town employees and officials.

New businesses approved

The board voted unanimously to adopt Resolution 10-2021, providing a conditional use permit to Diacut for a hay distribution business, and approved a new business license for KaWellness Inc.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Board of Trustees is scheduled to hold two meetings in February, on Feb.11 and 25 at 6 p.m. at Town Hall, 42 Valley Crescent. Meetings are normally held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. Information: 481-2953.

James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me. Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, Jan. 11

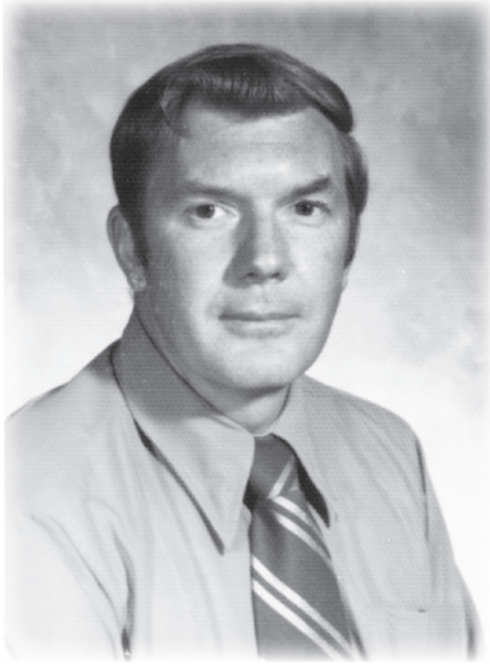
Board considers non-potable water strategy

By James Howald

At its Jan.11 meeting, the Woodmoor Water and Sanitation (WWSD) board discussed a potential reframing of its strategy for managing non-potable water. JVA Consulting, the company the district has hired to design and help manage several of their capital improvement projects, presented its analysis of pump capacity issues at the Lake Pump Station (LPS) and the Central Water Treatment Plant (CWTP).

The board also passed a resolution authorizing the purchase of a small piece of land adjacent to the northern edge of Lewis-Palmer Middle School (LPMS) from Lewis-Palmer School District 38. The board decided what to do with a dividend the district received from the Colorado Employer Benefit Trust (CEBT). Finally, the board heard operational reports.

Virgil Elias Watkins, 1931-2020



Virgil Elias Watkins passed into the loving arms of the Lord on December 4, 2020. Virgil was born in Cohasset, Minnesota on October 2, 1931. He was born the youngest of three children to Harry Aken and Edna Lynn Watkins. Virgil spent many years of his young life around northern Minnesota before the family moved to Port Orchard, Washington. In 1945, Virgil and his family moved to Ovid, Colorado, where Virgil graduated from Ovid High School in 1949. Virgil chose to go to school in Fort Collins, pursuing a degree in teaching. While he was in school, he joined the Army National Guard of Colorado and served his country while he pursued his degree, climbing the ranks until he reached Master Sergeant.

In 1952, Virgil Watkins moved to Sioux City, Iowa and it was there that he met the love of his life and bride-to-be, JoAnn Aschinger on a blind date set up by friends. Virgil and JoAnn married on Sept. 5, 1953 in Sioux City and returned to Ft. Collins, Colorado. Virgil continued to work on his teaching degree and maintain his commitment to the National Guard, while Jodie continued her career in nursing. In 1957, Virgil and Jodie were blessed with their first child, Timothy Virgil. In 1959, Virgil and his family moved to Stratton, Colorado where Virgil took his first job as a teacher at

Stratton High School. While there, Virgil spent a few summers as a trail guide at Cheeley Camps in Cheeley, Colorado. Virgil and Jodie were also blessed with two more children in Stratton: Bonnie Lynn and David George. Virgil continued to work at Stratton High School until 1963, when Virgil and Jodie moved their family to Palmer Lake, Colorado where they became fixtures of the community for decades to come. Virgil worked at Lewis Palmer High School until his retirement in 1992.

Virgil Watkins loved to teach. He was a natural born leader and had insight into any subject. Over his long career, he made many lifetime friends in Stratton, Monument, Palmer Lake, and across Colorado. Virgil was an avid lover of the outdoors from the time he was a boy in Northern Minnesota. He loved to fish, hike, camp, hunt, and revel in the natural world around him. Virgil had a vibrant love for life and love for his many friends. He was a dedicated servant of the town, acting as a polling official and working on the town board. Most of all, he was a deeply committed man of family. Virgil and Jodie raised their three children in the Little Log Church of Palmer Lake. They worked to instill in their children and grandchildren a sense of how to navigate and enjoy life in this world.

Virgil Watkins is preceded in death by his parents, brother and sister, as well as his son Timothy and wife, JoAnn. While he will be sorely missed, he has been reconnected with loved ones he held dear. Virgil leaves behind his daughter, Bonnie Gray, and his son, David Watkins, as well as six grandchildren: Caleb Gray, Zachary Gray, Arielle Watkins West, Jesse Gray, Isaac Watkins, and Aaron Gray. In addition, Virgil was lucky enough to be blessed with three great grandchildren: Elora West Watkins, Elias Emerson Gray, and Malcolm Timothy Watkins.

While the family and friends are devastated at the loss of a great man, restrictions and safety have to be considered at this time. There will be no gathering immediately to celebrate the life of Virgil and the family asks that you remember him in your own personal way until it is safe to gather together. Details regarding a possible gathering in the Springtime when things have improved can be provided by the family. In the meantime, if you would like to send cards, memories, pictures, or donations, please send them to P.O. Box 348, Palmer Lake, CO 80133.



Board plans future of non-potable water service

Non-potable water, sometimes called raw water, is not treated before it is delivered to customers and is typically used for irrigating greenspaces and athletic fields. In WWSD it is delivered through dedicated pipelines. WWSD charges lower rates for non-potable water than it does for treated water that is safe for human consumption.

District Manager Jessie Shaffer explained to the board that at present WWSD has two customers for non-potable water: Village Center, a residential development at the northeast corner of Highway 105 and Knollwood Drive, and Lewis-Palmer High School (LPHS). Shaffer said other customers have expressed an interest in switching to non-potable water for irrigation.

Shaffer summed up the district’s policy on non-potable water by saying if a customer can use it, and the customer is located close to the non-potable pipelines, the district will provide it to that customer, but the district will not build additional infrastructure to make it available to all who might want it. Some customers are planning together to share the cost of new pipelines to deliver non-potable water, he said.

Shaffer said the district’s policies for non-potable water are based on the amount of undeveloped land in the district years ago. It was anticipated these estimates and policies would be re-examined when pumping stations were upgraded. Shaffer emphasized the issue before the board was pump design and capacity and said the existing non-potable pipelines were adequately sized for the anticipated demand.

Richard Hood, of JVA Consulting, pointed out that how the district chooses to proceed on the issue of non-potable water will impact the specifications for the pumps at the Central Water Treatment Plant (CWTP) and the South Water Treatment Plant (SWTP). He outlined three scenarios for the water treatment plants:

- The district continues to provide 400 gallons per minute (gpm) of non-potable water through only the SWTP at a capital cost of \$132,700.
- The district provides 700 gpm through the SWTP and 400 gpm through the CWTP at a capital cost of \$152,375.
- The district provides 800 gpm through the SWTP and 300 gpm through the CWTP at a capital cost of \$158,000

The first scenario would not allow for any new customers, Hood said. The second scenario could support more than six new customers for non-potable water, and the third scenario could support more than eight new customers. All three scenarios would involve changes to the pumps at the treatment plants, according to Hood.

Shaffer and Hood recommended the board use scenario two for planning purposes. Shaffer also asked the board to consider adding policy limitations on non-potable water service to allow more customers to use it,

suggesting a 50 gpm per customer limit on non-potable use. Board President Brian Bush pointed out that WWSD could also manage use by other methods such as imposing schedules for use of non-potable water use to keep demand within capacity.

Shaffer said WWSD had discussed with Lewis-Palmer School District 38 (LPSD38) the possibility of the school district moving to non-potable water for the fields at LPMS, but the cost to the school district had ended the discussion. The school district would have to pay for booster pumps to run their sprinklers on non-potable water, Shaffer said.

Bush proposed, with the support of the other board members, that scenario two be used as a basis for planning at the water treatment plants.

Pumping capacity considered

Hood outlined for the board issues related to pump capacity at the LPS, highlighting the relationship between the district’s non-potable water strategy and pump capacity issues at the LPS. Upgrading the LPS is one of the capital improvement projects the district currently has under way.

At present, Hood said, the LPS has two pumps, both of which supply the SWTP. Planned upgrades will increase the number of pumps at the LPS to six: three supplying the SWTP, two supplying the CWTP, and one swing pump that can supply either of the treatment plants. These changes improve redundancy and reliability. Currently there is a pipeline that conveys non-potable water from Woodmoor Lake to the SWTP and some customers receive non-potable water from that pipeline, Hood said.

Hood said JVA had planned pump capacity based on estimates of future non-potable water demands provided by Shaffer. Hood focused on the CWTP and presented two scenarios for that treatment plant:

- No future non-potable water delivered by the CWTP.
- 300 gpm of non-potable water delivered by the CWTP.

Shaffer said the big policy question is the likelihood that LPSD38 will want to move to non-potable water for all its fields, not just those at LPHS. If they did so, the school district would save money on water and WWSD would save costs at their water treatment plants, he said.

Bush said he saw two approaches to the issue of non-potable water: rates for potable water increase and motivate customers who are irrigating with potable water to switch to cheaper non-potable water, or the board decides to require all irrigation to be done with non-potable water to preserve water processing capability. He argued in favor of adding the ability to convey non-potable water to the CWTP, because WWSD could design in the flexibility now to increase non-potable water service at a future time at a low cost.

The board concurred with Bush that the ability to convey non-potable water should be added at the CWTP

to prepare for future customers of non-potable water to be served from that plant.

Board passes resolution regarding land purchase

At a previous meeting, the board approved the purchase of a small piece of land adjacent to LPMS. Shaffer told the board the title company used to complete the transaction had asked for a formal resolution approving the purchase be voted on by the board.

The board voted unanimously to pass the requested resolution.

Insurance dividend distributed to employees

Shaffer told the board that due to fewer insurance claims filed by WWSD employees in the previous year, the district had received a dividend from the Colorado Employer Benefit Trust, the public institution that provides employee benefits such as health insurance to WWSD employees, amounting to \$585 per employee. The cost of the benefits is paid by employees, Shaffer said. He asked the board for direction on what to do with the dividend.

The board voted unanimously to distribute the dividend back to the district’s employees.

\*\*\*\*\*

The next meeting is scheduled for Feb. 8 at 1 p.m. Meetings are usually held on the second Monday of each month at 1 p.m. Meetings are currently held at the Woodmoor Barn Community Center rather than the district office; please see [www.woodmoorwater.com](http://www.woodmoorwater.com) or call 488-2525 to verify meeting times and locations.

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

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Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility Joint Use Committee, Jan. 12

What regulations will be coming down the pipe?

By Lisa Hatfield

The Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility (TLWWTF) Joint Use Committee (JUC) met on Jan. 12 to review facility operations and discuss possible new regulations by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE).

TLWWTF is owned in equal one-third shares by Monument Sanitation District (MSD), Palmer Lake Sanitation District (PLSD), and Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD).

The three-member JUC acts as the board of the facility and consists of one director from each of the three owner districts’ boards: WWSD board Director Lee Hanson, JUC president; PLSD board member Reid Wiecks, JUC vice president; and MSD Treasurer John Howe, JUC secretary/treasurer. The meeting was held at TLWWTF, with several in attendance in person while others attended via Zoom.

Plant manager report

Facility Manager Bill Burks’ comments included:

- The new \$23,500 ultraviolet disinfection propane backup electric generator was installed.
- He sent a copy of the 2021 TLWWTF annual budget to the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA).
- The plant continues to discharge effluent that is well within specific state-permit limits for specific effluent constituent nutrients, metals, suspended solids, pH, and E. coli.
- TLWWTF continues to perform additional regular baseline samples of influent, effluent, and three locations upstream and downstream of the facility’s discharge pipe on Monument Creek for other met-

als and nutrients not listed on the facility’s state discharge permit.

- Congratulations to recently hired operator Doug Johnson for passing his Class D state wastewater certification for TLWWTF, the first permit a new operator can obtain from the CDPHE.

Stakeholder updates

Burks said the Jan. 5 Arkansas River/ Fountain Creek Coalition for Urban/Rural River Evaluation (AF CURE) meeting discussion included:

- Concern about anticipated decisions on Colorado state Regulation 31 (Basic Standards and Methodologies for Surface Water) proposals at the February meeting of Colorado Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC), as proposed by this department’s Colorado Water Quality Control Division (WQCD).
  - AF CURE’s ongoing multi-year wastewater nutrients modeling project looking ahead to having accurate data for several years before regulation compliance decisions at future WQCC meetings.
  - TLWWTF’s multi-year periphyton sampling result for December was much better than state and EPA water quality maximum concentration limits.
- MSD Environmental Compliance Coordinator Jim Kendrick reported on the Dec. 9 statewide Colorado Wastewater Utility Council meeting, including:
- CDPHE WQCD Acting Division Head Nicole Rowan said the division would have trouble implementing new per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) regulations due to severe budget and staffing shortages.
  - PFAS include over 4,700 environmentally persis-



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tent man-made substances that can cause adverse human health effects. See [www.epa.gov/pfas/basic-information-pfas](http://www.epa.gov/pfas/basic-information-pfas).

- The division does not yet know how to regulate PFAS in an affordable, scientifically valid sustained manner and WQCD does not have a science-based policy in place to develop PFAS regulations.
- The burden of determining how to accurately measure plant concentrations of PFAS constituents may

fall on individual plant operators on a case-by-case basis rather than undergoing a Colorado statute-based stakeholder review process initiated, organized, and implemented by CDPHE to monitor, treat, and control these unregulated contaminants.

- Only a very limited number of labs exist nationally that can accurately and reliably test for PFAS and local testing facilities would be both unreliable and swamped.

Burks asked when the division would contact wastewater dischargers to let them know when facilities like TLWWTF should even start sampling. Kendrick said to expect an email from WQCD when it can hire staff for this purpose sometime in the future.

In other matters, Kendrick also said a new state policy revision had been issued that states there will no longer be a reciprocity policy that honors existing wastewater collection and treatment licenses earned in other states. This will exacerbate the growing current overall critical shortage of licensed water and wastewater operators in Colorado.

In anticipation of upcoming regulations on technologically enhanced naturally occurring radioactive material (TENORM) treatment and safe disposal of these hazardous materials, Kendrick asked WWSD District Manager Jessie Shaffer about radium levels in WWSD potable drinking water. Shaffer said WWSD's treatment process reduces naturally occurring Radium 226 and Radium 228 in its groundwater to less than existing state and federal maximum contaminant concentration levels. WWSD is also collecting data on radionuclides on the wastewater side.

Shaffer also said Colorado Springs Utilities is still moving forward on the North Monument Creek Interceptor (NMCI) project but that concerns about water rights for return flows for all the

town and special district water entities in northern El Paso County need to be solved. No discussion about water and wastewater rates charged by CSU to OCN service area water entities or any of the various required water quality standards has occurred yet. See [www.ocn.me/v20n12.htm#dwsd](http://www.ocn.me/v20n12.htm#dwsd).

Kendrick voiced concerns about naturally occurring groundwater radionuclides removed in drinking water treatment from the Town of Monument water system being directly discharged into MSD's collection system and the cost of monitoring and controlling Town of Monument water treatment plant influent. See [www.ocn.me/v19n9.htm#tlwtj](http://www.ocn.me/v19n9.htm#tlwtj).

**Note:** The Town of Monument is a separate government entity from MSD. If residents have questions about drinking water, they should attend and ask questions at Monument Board of Trustees meetings. See related Monument BOT article on page 10.

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The next meeting is scheduled for 10 a.m. Feb. 9 at the Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility, 16510 Mitchell Ave. Meetings are normally held on the second Tuesday of the month and are open to the public from all three owner-districts. For information on virtual meeting access, call Bill Burks at 719-481-4053.

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

## Monument Sanitation District, Jan. 20

# Board resolves infrastructure issue

By Allison Robenstein and Lisa Hatfield

During the Jan. 20 Monument Sanitation District (MSD) board meeting, an infrastructure matter was resolved. The board also reviewed the engineer's report and the monthly financial report for the end of December, and took care of some administrative tasks to start the year.

During public comments, El Paso County resident Lisa Hatfield gave the district kudos for adding meeting call-in information to its updated website. She also hoped the board president would improve the sound quality of calls so that comments made by all five board members and the district's attorney could be heard by people calling in to the meeting.

## Infrastructure problems discussed and resolved

Dave Frisch of GMS Inc. Consulting Engineers brought an issue to the board re-

garding new construction. He dealt with a builder who was ready to pour cement to connect to MSD's sewer line without consulting far enough ahead of time with MSD about the required configuration.

Frisch said that the El Paso County Regional Building Code does not require submission of construction drawings to the Regional Building Department for a standalone single-family home. Nor does the MSD Sanitary Sewer Regulation require a preconstruction meeting between the builder and the MSD district manager before breaking ground in this specific circumstance.

The adjacent house, built in 1957, is connected to the line in a way that would not be allowed by today's standards, but was grandfathered in.

The problem is who should be responsible for the cost and service lines. The estimated cost for the work could reach \$8,000.

After much debate among the board members, the final decision was to direct the builder to pay all costs to connect to the sewer line as required by code, and MSD will cover any additional costs to connect the new build that are related to issues with the 1957 house. The board directed Frisch to identify all the costs associated with the new layout.

In a separate discussion, Treasurer John Howe said a town snowplow had broken an MSD manhole casting at Dirty Woman Park. It has been fixed with no costs to the district other than the time for GMS to be onsite supervising the repair and reconfiguring it, so it won't be vulnerable in the future.

## Engineering reports

- GMS Inc. provides resident project representation services for MSD to the Willow Springs Subdivision development process. Drawings for the lift station and water main were received and reviewed by GMS during the sewer system installation. During the next month, lines will be air tested and manholes constructed.
- GMS continues to respond to nu-

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JUC (Cont. on 20)



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JUC (Cont. from 18)

- merous questions and provide information to property owners and developers in MSD that would normally be dealt with by the MSD district manager. GMS included a detailed list of this activity.
- Donala Water and Sanitation District recently signed an intergovernmental agreement with MSD to become the operator in responsible charge (ORC) with coordination from GMS during the negotiations. Donala has agreed to provide a detailed monthly progress report to both GMS and the MSD board beginning in February.
  - GMS has begun work on the MSD board’s request for an MSD tap fee rates study. GMS asked to be made aware of any MSD potential capital improvement projects that may or should be planned over the next five to 10 years to help determine MSD’s total capital project expenses during that period.
  - 144 locate requests that were received by MSD were completed by GMS between Dec. 12, 2020 and Jan. 15, 2021.

Financial reports

MSD’s accounting firm Haynie & Co. submitted a nine-page accountant report as of the end of December 2020. Some examples of line items reported as of Dec. 31, 2020:

- Year-to-date engineering fees were 790% of 2020 budget, or \$69,038 higher than expected.
- Wages were 131% of budget, or \$76,251 higher than expected.
- Tap fees collected were \$162,500 lower than the \$620,000 expected.
- Overall year-to-date expenses for the year were 120% of budget, or \$174,098 higher than expected.

**Note:** This is not the final 2020 audit, and more data from 2020 may still come in. Haynie & Co. has not verified the accuracy or completeness of the information provided to it. It is not yet time for it to express an opinion on this financial statement.

Administrative tasks

The board voted unanimously to approve its 2021 Administrative Resolution, which included:

- The MSD 2021 meeting schedule is the same as in previous years—the third Wednesday of every month at 9 a.m. Meeting information will be posted on the front window of the MSD meeting room at 130 Second St., Monument and on the website, Home | Monument Sanitation District (colorado.gov).
- A lease agreement review was tabled by special district counsel Joan Fritsche until next month. She will contact tenants about their leases to update verbiage in the contract, but there will not be an increase in their rents.

- Directors Laura Kronick’s and Katie Saucedá’s were both appointed to previously unfilled assistant secretary positions for 2021.
- Consultant engagement renewal letters for contractors included: Fritsche Law LLC; GMS Consulting Engineers Inc.; and Haynie & Co. CPAs.
- The board unanimously approved a payment for each director of \$100 per meeting each attends, up to \$2,400 per year per director.
- Legal notices will be posted in the Gazette.
- The board members are responsible to have the annual audit prepared.

The board went into executive session at 10:23 a.m. to discuss personnel matters and receive legal advice from Fritsche. Upon returning to open session, Howe reported no decisions were made after the executive session and the meeting adjourned at 10:59 a.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

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 Feb. 17 at 9 a.m. See <https://colorado.gov/msd>. For a district service map, see <https://colorado.gov/pacific/msd/district-map-0>. Information: 719-481-4886.

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

Triview Metropolitan District, Dec. 28 and Jan. 21

Renewable water resource secured

By Jennifer Kaylor

The Triview Metropolitan District scheduled a special meeting at the end of December and convened for its regular Board of Directors meeting on Jan. 21. The brief special meeting confirmed an additional water rights acquisition. Project updates and status reports primarily comprised the January meeting.

All board directors, District Manager Jim McGrady, water attorney Chris Cummins, Water Superintendent Shawn Sexton, and Parks and Open Space Superintendent Matt Rayno attended the meeting online or by phone.

Triview is a Title 32 special district in Monument that provides road, landscaping, and parks and open space maintenance, and water and wastewater services to Jackson Creek, Promontory Pointe, Sanctuary Pointe, and several commercial areas. See <https://triviewmetro.com/districtMap> for a map of district boundaries.

The Dec. 28 special meeting agenda may be accessed via [https://triviewmetro.com/assets/documents/board/agenda/2020/Agenda\\_SpecialMeeting\\_2020-12-28v2.pdf](https://triviewmetro.com/assets/documents/board/agenda/2020/Agenda_SpecialMeeting_2020-12-28v2.pdf). The Jan. 21 meeting agenda and board packet may be accessed via [https://triviewmetro.com/assets/documents/board/agenda/2021/BoardPacket\\_2021-01-21.pdf](https://triviewmetro.com/assets/documents/board/agenda/2021/BoardPacket_2021-01-21.pdf)

A schedule of the 2021 board meeting dates is available at [https://triviewmetro.com/assets/documents/board/2021/BOARD\\_MEETING\\_DATES\\_2021.pdf](https://triviewmetro.com/assets/documents/board/2021/BOARD_MEETING_DATES_2021.pdf)

Special meeting confirms water rights and land purchase

A late 2020 acquisition met the directors’ approval at a special meeting conducted Dec. 28. Through resolutions 2020-20 and 2020-21, the district acquired renewable water rights and land—162 acres and 222 acres—from Sailor Investments LLP and Quarter Circle 2 Ranch LLC respectively. The 384-acre sum included a water right called the Arkansas Valley Irrigation Canal that had been historically used for agricultural purposes. The Sailor property was estimated to provide 302 acre-feet of water and the Quarter Circle land included an estimated 192 acre-feet, for a total of 494 acre-feet of renewable water. The purchase price for the full transaction was slightly less than \$5.6 million.

McGrady explained that because this water flows directly from the Arkansas River into the Pueblo Reservoir, it bypasses the need to be exchanged, but the water right still requires a change case from agricultural use to municipal use, as well as a 1041 permit with Chaffee County. “This purchase basically creates a more diverse portfolio of water. Now that Triview has sources from three separate regions of the state, it increases the district’s reliability for renewable water,” he said.

From acquisition to implementation

One of the district’s planned public relations measures included publication of an extensive newsletter informing Triview customers of the district’s 2020 accomplishments and 2021 action items. The special publication would include information about 2020 water assets acquired, progress on a return flow pipeline—called the Northern Delivery system—which is instrumental in delivering the water assets to Triview customers, road rehabilitation projects and other updates. McGrady described 2020 as a year of acquisition with 2021 focusing on implementation of the numerous and necessary water rights filings and 1041 permitting applications, con-

struction of a “long overdue” Public Works facility, and completion of the Leather Chaps overlay project.

Projects keep pace

McGrady reported about ongoing projects that included:

- One part of a well installation project in Sanctuary Pointe, well D9, became fully operational the day of the meeting. Commenting on the craftsmanship of the combination well house and restroom facility, McGrady said, “In my mind, that’s one of the most beautiful structures and it’s a pretty unique way to hide what could be an unsightly well house ... .” He confirmed a collaborative effort to submit photos and statistics of the Classic Homes design to the American Water Works Association for potential honors.
- A recent communication from Colorado Springs Utilities indicated that the permitting process on the North Monument Creek Interceptor, a regional wastewater pipeline, was going very well. McGrady commented that it wouldn’t be long before the northern El Paso County participants, including Triview and neighboring wastewater districts, would need to determine their level of participation in the project.
- JDS Hydro selected a tank site for the Northern Delivery System—a return flow pipeline necessary for delivering Triview’s renewable water from distant locations to its customers. McGrady confirmed that the engineering firm was working to secure the county’s approval and that the system’s design incorporated measures to minimize the tank’s visibility and footprint.
- Triview’s Excess Capacity Agreement, also called an if-and-when contract, with Pueblo Reservoir was moving more quickly than expected. LRE Water, the engineering firm spearheading this work, anticipated having documents for the Bureau of Reclamation ready by April 1. McGrady estimated having a contract by mid-July if the April 1 goal is met.
- Inlet and spillway work at the Stonewall Springs Reservoir Complex completed construction of a culvert and transitioned to working on the channel.
- Preparations for a steel building set to be outfitted as a Public Works facility in the district’s A yard, near Jackson Creek Parkway (JCP), continued to progress.

Additional actions and plans

- McGrady provided information about a study funded in equal parts by Triview, CSI Construction, and Home Place Ranch developer HR Green to improve Higby Road. Preliminary ideas included bike lanes, center medians, roundabouts, and a detached walking trail. The next phase for the road improvement participants would address financing mechanisms.
- Directors approved Resolution 2021-01, a measure to update the district’s engineering and construction standards. McGrady explained that advancements in materials and methodologies gave rise to necessary amendments in engineering specifications. Updates to engineering “specs” usually need to be addressed every few years, he added.
- Rayno discussed plans to hire two full-time personnel to match landscape and streetscape main-

tenance needs in Sanctuary Pointe and to develop an apprenticeship in anticipation of a seasoned worker’s plan to retire in three years.

- Design plans and preparatory work had been initiated for enhancing the landscapes at the northeast corner of Leather Chaps Drive and Baptist Road as well as the northwest corner of Baptist Road and JCP, reported Rayno.
- Water Superintendent Shawn Sexton commended Assistant District Administrator Wendy Brown and District Administrator Joyce Levad for creating efficiencies for the Public Works Department. Brown consolidated vehicle registrations for the district’s fleet of trucks, saving time and expense. Levad created a reporting system for rented hydrant meters that improved the calculation accuracy of water consumption.
- Describing the Colorado 8-1-1 process of fulfilling requests for locating and marking Triview’s utility lines—similar to “call before you dig” requests—Sexton credited Public Works staff for its hard work and diligence in keeping up with the 250 or more monthly requests.
- McGrady confirmed a loss of tools due to a theft in December. Rayno provided information for Monument Police to investigate the situation.

At 6:45 p.m., the board entered executive session §24-6-402(4)(b)(e) and (f) legal advice, negotiations, and personnel matters regarding the following general topics: negotiations associated with water delivery infrastructure; negotiations associated with water storage on the Arkansas River and its tributaries; negotiations with potential contractors and miners concerning the Stonewall Springs Reservoir Complex; and personnel matters. OCN later confirmed that the board did not make reportable decisions following the executive session.

\*\*\*\*\*

Triview board meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month at 5:30 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Feb. 18. The district completed its move to a new office located at 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302. Check the district’s website or call 488-6868 for meeting updates and to confirm if the meeting will be in person or online/teleconference. See also “Triview Metropolitan District” on Facebook or Twitter.com/@TriviewMetro.

Jennifer Kaylor can be contacted at [jenniferkaylor@ocn.me](mailto:jenniferkaylor@ocn.me).

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## Waste output, water input draw district's attention



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# MVEA BOARD NOMINATIONS

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During the Annual Meeting on June 3, 2021, at Falcon High School in Falcon, three directors will be elected to the Mountain View Electric Association, Inc. Board of Directors from the following districts:

District 1: Limon, Karval, Genoa and surrounding areas (*incumbent Joseph D. Martin*)

District 4: Calhan, Peyton, a portion of Black Forest and surrounding areas (*incumbent Milton L. Mathis*)

District 6: Falcon, Cimarron Hills, a portion of Black Forest and surrounding areas (*incumbent Barry R. Springer*)

The "Procedure for Director Elections and Member Voting" is available on MVEA's website at [www.mvea.coop/annual-meeting](http://www.mvea.coop/annual-meeting).

To view a territory map with districts, visit [www.mvea.coop/territory-map](http://www.mvea.coop/territory-map).

Are you interested in being an MVEA Board of Directors candidate? A candidate must be an MVEA member and reside in the district where there is a vacancy. Visit MVEA's Annual Meeting web page at [www.mvea.coop/annual-meeting](http://www.mvea.coop/annual-meeting) for additional candidate requirements. Click on "By-laws" and go to Article III, Section 2. A member interested in nomination should contact the MVEA Board Nomination Information Line at (719) 494-2528 and leave a message. You will be contacted to verify your membership, district, and to begin the nomination process. A member may seek election by nomination by the nominating committee or nomination by petition.

- To be nominated by the nominating committee, please contact the MVEA Board Nomination Information Line at (719) 494-2528. If seeking election by nomination through the nominating committee, a candidate questionnaire must be received by MVEA to be submitted to the committee by 5:30 p.m., Thursday, March 25, 2021.
- To be nominated by petition, you must have the petition signed by 15 MVEA members. Petitions and procedures will be made available by contacting the MVEA Board Nomination Information Line at (719) 494-2528. The petition, along with a completed candidate questionnaire, must be received by MVEA by 5:30 p.m., Monday, April 19, 2021.

A candidate questionnaire must be completed for either nomination by the committee or nomination by petition. If you have questions, please contact the MVEA Board Nomination Information Line.

**Nominating Committee**

District 1: Steve Burgess • District 4: Ed Kovitz • District 6: Lavern Kauffman

**MVEA Board Nomination Information Line**

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**Board and legislative update**

Board of Education Liaison Tiffiney Upchurch reported that the board’s recent actions included a one-time compensation of \$1,000 for each full-time employee and the refinancing of bonds, which will result in savings to taxpayers.

Upchurch reported that the board has approved an investment-grade audit of electricity use from Schneider Electric.

The district was notified that the per pupil revenue for the current year has been reduced by \$64.04 to \$7,598 per pupil. This change in revenue resulted in adjustments to the annual budget.

A Parent Advocacy Network is being created at the state level and Upchurch encouraged all to participate, cautioning that a long-term commitment will be involved.

The board has selected owner’s representatives to investigate the condition and use of Grace Best Education Center. The representatives from Anser Advisory and Cooperative Strategies will form a steering committee composed of community members, parents, staff, and students to handle Requests for Proposals for any work proposed. Applications for the steering committee can be found on the district website, lewispalmer.org.

Upchurch stressed that the current users of the building, including Bearbotics from Palmer Ridge and the Homeschool Enrichment Academy will not be evicted from the building, but other uses of the facility will be explored.

Teachers are expected to receive vaccinations for COVID-19 by the end of February. Nurses and some staff members with pre-existing conditions have already been vaccinated.

The state legislative session opened Jan. 26 but will

be postponed until February due to the virus. Gov. Jared Polis hopes to increase the per pupil revenue by \$900 for the 2021-22 school year.

Superintendent KC Somers also mentioned that, in addition to service on the Steering Committee, there will be additional opportunities for community engagement in the Grace Best project.

**Safety and Security update**

Chief of Safety and Security Dennis Coates reported that, since his last report, door alarms have been installed on many facilities. There had been a particular concern at the high schools which have several entrances and students often leave during their lunch period.

Scanners are being installed at the entrances of each school so that students can scan their ID when they enter or leave. This allows the school to be aware of who is present and allows them to refuse entry to those who have been suspended or those who should be under quarantine. The scanners are being installed at the middle school first.

Emergency drills continue, taking care to ensure social distancing. Cohorts are maintained during these drills to prevent exposure to COVID-19 among students who otherwise would not be in contact.

Bear Creek Elementary and Prairie Winds Elementary have installed 3M film on glass near their entrances. This film makes it much more difficult to break the glass. The film was funded by grants.

Regarding student mental health, Coates said that there are increased emails directly to counselors in addition to the use of Safe2Tell to anonymously report concerns. Students are spending an increased amount of time on social media, which is increasing concern.

The district has received a \$642,000 grant from the Department of Homeland Security to link the district into communication channels of first responders such as

the Sheriff’s Office, police, and fire departments. In this way, the first responders can be notified about situations in the schools before they arrive. This project should be completed by August.

**Budget review**

Chief Financial Officer Shanna Seelye reported on the mid-year budget review, including funding from the CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security) Act and the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding. This funding was applied to provide equipment to make distance learning possible, personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies, and personnel.

A percentage of this funding was provided to Monument Academy and to St. Peter Catholic school.

Most recently, the ESSER funding was used to fund training for synchronous learning at the secondary level that began in January, allowing students to attend class in real time from home interacting with their teachers and peers.

Seelye also reported that, due to conservative budgeting for this year, the shortfall in enrollment was absorbed without difficulty, but the lower per pupil revenue (a decrease of \$64 per pupil) will be compensated through the use of reserves.

Priorities for this year are compensation of staff, K-5 literacy, deferred maintenance, and security upgrades.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Lewis-Palmer District 38 District Accountability Advisory Committee meets five times a year. All meetings this year will be held virtually. The next meeting is on Tuesday, Feb. 9 from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

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

Monument Academy School Board, Jan. 6 and 14

Board sets 2021 goals, reviews vision

*By Jackie Burhans*

The Monument Academy (MA) School Board held a special meeting on Jan. 6 to review board training requirements and set goals for 2021. At the regular board meeting on Jan. 14, the board passed a revised budget, reviewed the MA vision statement, and considered creating a chief financial officer role.

A special meeting to discuss marketing strategy on Jan. 27 was canceled due to scheduling conflicts.

**Board training**

Board President Melanie Strop referred the board to a list of Colorado Department of Education (CDE) training requirements for the Colorado Charter Schools Program (CCSP) grant that MA is receiving. The board is required to complete 12 charter school board training modules this year along with board fundamentals events, topic-based webinars, specialized governing board training, and sessions at either the Colorado or national charter school conferences. MA Chief Operating Officer Christianna Herrera noted that there will be site visit next fall around October and that the modules need to be complete by then. She asked that board members report back after completing each module, reporting on what they learned. This will be great preparation for the site visit, she said.

The national charter school conference is tentative due to COVID travel restrictions. However, the Colorado League of Charter Schools is having an online, virtual conference in March with specific board breakout sessions. There are also Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) training sessions available and at least one must be completed.

Herrera also noted that the board must perform self-evaluations by April. Each board member fills out the evaluation and then reports on the average score at the May meeting. This is considered a “best practice” and will be reviewed at the site visit.

**2021 goals**

After much discussion, the board agreed to two main areas of focus, which were divided into short- and long-term goals:

- Continue to set MA apart academically. In the short term, MA will continue academic interventions to get kids caught up and fill in any gaps as identified in their UIP. The board will review the internally developed vision statement at its January meeting and vote to approve it at the February meeting. The long-term goals will focus on teacher retention, professional development, and curriculum.
- Keep MA financially sound. In the short term, the board will approve the 2021-22 budget to put MA back into a financial position to boost their reserve fund and will work to increase enrollment by 250 students by September. Also, it will complete required training sessions by June 2021 and review the current administrative structure at the

January meeting, voting to approve any changes in February. In the long term, the board will focus on sound financial principals to continue to meet its bond requirements and focus on any state and federal laws that could affect programs at MA. It will also work to increase parent involvement and complete all future required training and conference sessions.

**Revised budget**

Marc Brocklehurst, director of finance, presented the revised budget, which included a rescission from the state plus other revenue impacts and expense changes. He noted that the state had decreased per pupil operating revenue by \$64 per student, which impacts both campuses. Shanna Seelye, chief financial officer at D38, is applying for Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds, of which \$41,000 would go to MA to be split between campuses.

MA also saw an increase in revenue for the east campus of \$116,000 for the first year of a three-year reimbursement from the CCSP grant. It was not originally included in the November budget because he wasn’t sure it would come in. Brocklehurst said some money was shifted from unspent budget line items to the advertising budget to boost it to \$50,000. The total impact of these budget revisions is the net loss lowered to \$691,000, leaving an ending fund balance of \$2.1 million.

The revised budget was unanimously approved by the board.

**Vision statement**

East campus Principal Julie Seymour presented the vision statement to the board, describing a process that started in 2018. While MA has a mission statement, it needed to have a vision to unite staff and send them forward with a laser-like focus, she said. This work was informed by the book Full Steam Ahead by Ken Blanchard, which discusses the value of a vision statement and identifies its components. In fall 2018 she began the work with now Assistant Principal Carol Skinner, who

helped to lead the entire faculty and staff into the process to achieve consensus.

The first part is the purpose, which answers why MA does what it does. The next part is a picture of the future—a picture of the end result. Then the vision identifies five value words that guide daily behaviors. The five words are: Security, Character, Connections, Growth, and Excellence.

The board unanimously approved the vision statement, which will be displayed on the school web site.

**Highlights**

The following items were highlighted at the board meeting:

- Recognizing that Brocklehurst has done an exceptional job, the board unanimously agreed to ask the Governance Committee to move forward with putting together an organizational change regarding the chief financial officer position. Sherry Buzzell, director of human resources, will review employment law to determine if this is considered a promotion or a new job that needs to be posted.
- The board unanimously approved an amendment to the staff policy handbook that includes tracking leave to quarter-hour increments.
- The board unanimously approved changes to the 2021-22 calendar, changing Jan. 3 to a day off, with Jan. 4 as a teacher workday and Jan. 5 as the student return day. See <http://bit.ly/ma-cal-2122> for the approved calendar.

\*\*\*\*\*

The next meeting will be on Thursday, Feb. 11 at 6 p.m. The MA School Board usually meets at 6 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. Meetings may be held in person and/or via Zoom, which will be streamed to the MA YouTube channel. For more information on how to join the meeting in person or virtually or to submit a public comment, see <https://bit.ly/ma-boe>.

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

Lewis-Palmer District 38 Board of Education, Jan. 25

Board marks School Board Recognition Month, discusses mid-year budget adjustment and conditions during pandemic

*By Harriet Halbig*

The District 38 Board of Education celebrated Board of Education Recognition Month on Jan. 25 as it received

gifts and messages from several schools in the form of videos, cookies, and other items. Superintendent K.C. Somers praised the board members for their sacrifices of





**Above:** In honor of National School Board Recognition Month, Carissa O'Donnell, left, and Lauren Phillips thanked the board for its service and presented members with keepsakes. O'Donnell and Phillips are seniors at Lewis-Palmer High School and members of the student council. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

time in the interest of the students of the district.

Principal Drew Francis of Kilmer Elementary School gave a presentation on Project Based Learning in the form of building an outdoor learning space. Students designed the space, estimated funding and materials needs, and created an area with picnic tables and umbrellas outdoors where students could have lunch together or hold a class.

In their comments, members of the board spoke of their recent activities. Board Secretary Tiffney Upchurch reported that Chief of Safety and Security Dennis Coates received a \$642,000 grant from the Department of Homeland Security to implement a system for sharing information with first responders via the police, sheriff, and fire communication channels. The system will be online by fall.

Upchurch also mentioned that the state is creating a Parent Advocacy Network and encouraged all to apply to participate to ensure that the district's voice is heard. Also, the Legislature will need to decide whether districts will administer the annual Colorado Measure of Academic Success (CEMAS) tests this year. If a waiver is not granted, the district could lose funding for failing to administer the tests.

In his remarks, Somers said much time is still being spent in discussions of district response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some are impatient for all students to return to full-time in-person learning, but Somers emphasized that the district is legally required to abide by state and county health mandates. The state remains in the orange

range of the dashboard regarding the pandemic, requiring masks of all students and staff and social distancing in class.

As a result, the middle and high schools continue to operate on a hybrid schedule, spending two days in the schools and the rest participating online. An improvement this semester is the introduction of synchronous learning, where students attend classes at home in real time so they may interact with their teachers and peers. Teachers and students have praised this development.

It is hoped that the 2021-22 school year will see students back in the classrooms. Eighty to 90% of teachers have expressed an interest in being vaccinated. However, vaccines are not yet approved for teachers.

In response to a question from board Treasurer Ron Schwarz, Somers said that academic testing remains controversial. Teachers feel that time with students is precious and testing would be too stressful. However, the resulting data is valuable.

Advanced Placement tests will be administered, but others, such as the SAT and ACT, may be postponed until April unless the district is otherwise notified. The district must be adaptable to the requirements of the state.

Somers said that the board spent time discussing the pandemic at its work session on Jan 12. He also said that owner's representatives had been selected for the Grace Best project. Anser Advisory and Cooperative Strategies has been tasked with evaluating the property, determining alternative uses, and overseeing any construction. A steering committee of 15 to 20 district staff, teachers,

parents, students, and community members has been selected and will hold its first meeting on Feb. 3. Progress will be covered on the district website [ppld.org](http://ppld.org), and there will be future opportunities for community input.

**Budget review**

Chief Financial Officer Shanna Seelye presented a mid-year budget review for the board. The student population at the October count is 6,510, with 849 also participating online. She stressed that many students do both. The student count is down 205 from last year, but this number was foreseen and used as a basis for planning.

Somers estimated that the student count next year may be 300 fewer due to a large graduating class and small kindergarten class.

Seelye said that the district's flexible budgeting system allows for monthly adjustments as conditions change.

Seelye reported that the state had recently decreased per pupil revenue by \$64 per pupil bringing it to \$7,598, necessitating drawing from reserves to make up the balance. Also, the board voted to award a one-time compensation of \$1,000 per full-time employee in December.

Seelye also explained the receipt of allocations from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act and the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund from the federal government is to be used for personal protective equipment, technology for distance learning, (Chromebooks, etc.) and cleaning supplies. This district has also ordered rapid antigen tests for COVID. Students will not be tested without parental approval.

**Policy decisions**

The board held a first reading of several district policies, as recommended by the Colorado Association of School Boards.

The board approved a consent agenda consisting of such items as minutes of past meetings, a memorandum of understating with the University of Colorado Denver for concurrent registration, personnel items, and the Monument Academy Charter School Revised Budget.

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The Lewis-Palmer District 38 Board of Education usually meets at 6 p.m. on the third Monday of each month at its Learning Center, 146 Jefferson St., Monument. Due to the President's Day holiday in February, the board will meet on Feb. 22. Seating is extremely limited, but meetings are livestreamed. To view the meeting, go to the district website, board of education, meetings, livestream.

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

*El Paso Board of County Commissioners, Jan 12, 19, and 26*

**Rezoning and final plat approvals for Black Forest properties**

*By Helen Walklett*

During January, the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approved a rezoning application by Rob Haddock to allow the construction of an office building near the intersection of Shoup Road and Black Forest Road and approved a final plat application for the Winsome development at the intersection of Hodgen Road and Meridian Road. The commissioners also made decisions relating to the Highway 105 project, an annexation request, and the Settlers View and Jackson Ranch developments.

**Haddock rezoning**

At their Jan. 26 meeting, the commissioners heard a request by Rob Haddock to rezone his 4.77-acre property from A-5 (agricultural) to CC (commercial community). The property is located on the west side of Black Forest Road, just to the north of the Shoup Road and Black Forest Road intersection. The property is almost completely surrounded by RR zoning with an area of various commercial zonings in close proximity. There was previously a veterinary hospital on the site, allowed via a special use approval in 1985, which was destroyed during the Black Forest fire of 2013. Since acquiring the property, Haddock has removed all burn debris, constructed berms along Black Forest Road, and begun reforestation and revegetation.

Haddock is proposing construction of an 8,800-square-foot office building, with a 4,400-square-foot footprint, to facilitate collaboration between the executive staff of his family business, Metal Roof Innovations Ltd, who currently work from home. In total, 16 people would use the office, with up to half travelling for business or working from home at any one time. In spring 2020, Haddock began construction of a barn on the property, which is allowed under the current A-5 zoning. This will be used as a studio for the business while the manufacturing part of the business will remain out of state.

The El Paso County Planning Commission heard the application at its Dec. 17 meeting and voted 9-1 to recommend it for approval. Commissioner Eric Moraes was the dissenting vote, concerned by the number of uses

allowed under the CC zoning and stating that he would have preferred to see the application come forward as a variance of use. See [https://www.ocn.me/v21n1.htm?zoom\\_highlight=haddock](https://www.ocn.me/v21n1.htm?zoom_highlight=haddock)

Nina Ruiz, planning manager, Planning and Community Development, summarized the public feedback received as highlighting concerns about the application's visual incompatibility with the rural residential zoning surrounding it, the incompatibility of the use with the adjacent zoning, and that the proposed use was not a good representation of the CC zoning district. Ruiz clarified that the proposed use is allowed under the CC zoning.

Six people spoke in favor, including Terry Stokka, chairman, Black Forest Land Use Committee, Peggy Littleton, former county commissioner, and Judy van Ahlefeldt, a long-time Black Forest resident. An adjacent neighbor spoke against by telephone.

All five commissioners were in support of the application, and it was approved unanimously.

**Winsome development**

Also at the Jan. 26 meeting, the BOCC voted unanimously to approve a final plat request for the first filing at the Winsome development. The final plat consists of 164.4 acres with 47 single-family residential lots, three tracts for open space, drainage and utility purposes, and rights-of-way. The property is located at the northwest corner of the Hodgen Road and Meridian Road intersection and is the redevelopment of the McCune Ranch. The application was approved as a consent item, meaning there was no further discussion.

The entire property is 767 acres, and the preliminary plan for 143 residential lots and one commercial lot was approved in July 2019. At the same time, 350 acres were rezoned from RR-5 (residential rural) to RR-2.5 (residential rural). A separate portion was rezoned to the CC (commercial community) zoning district. See <https://www.ocn.me/v19n8.htm#epbocc>.

**Chair and vice chair appointed, new and re-elected commissioners sworn in**

In a ceremony ahead of the Jan. 12 BOCC meeting, Carrie Geitner was sworn in as commissioner for District

2, which was previously represented by Mark Waller. Also sworn in for a second term were incumbent commissioners Longinos Gonzalez Jr. and Stan VanderWerf. Commissioners may serve two four-year terms.

At the Jan.12 BOCC meeting, the commissioners appointed VanderWerf as chair and Commissioner Cami Bremer as vice chair.

**Highway 105 contract**

The commissioners approved a new contract with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) for the second part of the Highway 105 project at their Jan. 26 meeting. The new contract reconciles overall funding and establishes an agreement specifically for the construction part of the project between Lake Woodmoor Drive and Highway 83. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2022.

**Annexation of land into the Town of Monument**

The commissioners voted unanimously to accept an annexation impact report from the Town of Monument for a 10.7-acre property zoned RR-5 (residential rural) located just south of the intersection of Baptist and Woodcarver Roads. The property owner, Native Sun Construction Inc., is requesting its annexation into the Town of Monument. The county's staff report states that the annexation "is a logical extension of the jurisdictional boundaries and is necessary to develop this portion of El Paso County." The Planning and Community Development Department had no concern with the proposed annexation.

**County adopts streets at two Black Forest developments**

The commissioners approved the adoption of streets at the Settlers View and Jackson Ranch developments in Black Forest into the county's road maintenance system during January. They also approved the preliminary release of a letter of credit for \$107,930 for subdivision improvements at the Jackson Ranch Filing No. 3. This followed the completion and satisfactory inspection of all the required improvements.

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



Northern El Paso County Home Owners Associations (NEPCO), Jan. 23

# NEPCO has Zoom meeting and welcomes county engineer

By Marlene Brown

At a Zoom meeting on Jan. 23, Greg Lynd, president of the Northern El Paso County Home Owners Associations (NEPCO), welcomed two new member HOAs, which brings the total membership to 49 HOAs from the area. He introduced representatives from Timber HOA, off of Furrow and Highway 105, and the Meadow at Monument Lake HOA—homes on Bel Lago View.

Lynd also noted there are over 9,000 homes in the focus area with over 20,000 registered voters.

Matthew Nelson, chairman of the Wildfire Preparedness Committee who works for the Woodmoor Improvement Association and was not in attendance, is looking into a grant for NEPCO to spend over the next four years for fire mitigation for the Black Forest area.

## Transportation and Land Use Committee

Paul Pirog, vice chairman of the Transportation and Land Use Committee, said there were many ongoing projects in northern El Paso County. The committee reviewed 55 land use applications and Land Use Code provisions in 2020. It has requested that the county Planning Commission and BOCC review its recommendations before voting to approve a project in northern El Paso County. Over 20 new land use projects are looking for approval in the county system just in the last month.

Many comments on the projects’ reviews and recommendations include: rezoning, lot size, traffic density, bike lanes, sidewalks, water use and sufficiency,

lighting, fencing, building height and colors, landscaping, and setbacks. For more information regarding transportation and land use for northern El Paso County or to work on the committee, go to [nepco.org](http://nepco.org) and leave an email message.

## County engineer

Jennifer Irvine, El Paso County engineer, Department of Public Works, Storm Water Management, said the county reports to, and must be compliant with, the State Stormwater Program through its Storm Water Sewer System Permit issued by Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. The county must have its facilities, such as ponds, grass swales, sand basins, cross culverts, and curb inlets, inspected yearly and maintained.

Requirements of HOAs include maintaining common areas and open spaces, such as mowing, trash/debris removal and weed control, facility repairs, and sediment removal. Mowing should be done routinely for turf at 2 to 4 inches and native grass at 6 inches. Some irrigation is needed for healthy grass, herbicide or hand pulling for weed control, and mosquito treatment according to the EPA standard and eliminating standing water for mosquito habitat. Other considerations are aesthetics, storm damage, and wildlife management.

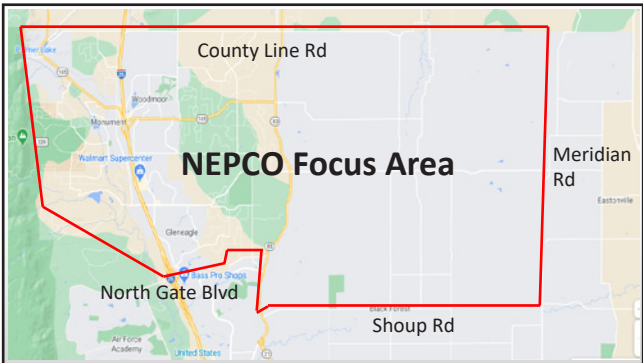
For a courtesy site visit, contact Joe Marencik, stormwater coordinator (719) 330-4137 or for more information, download the Colorado Stormwater Center Inspection and Maintenance Field Guide at

<http://stormwatercenter.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/BMP-I-M-Manual.pdf>

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The purpose of NEPCO is to promote an economic, ecological, and sociological community environment, to help to protect property rights of member HOAs, and to work with government agencies regarding planned development and maintenance. It also serves as a point of contact working with the county Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) regarding land use and transportation matters in its focus area, which includes Tri-Lakes, Glen Eagle, and Black Forest. See map below courtesy NEPCO.

Marlene Brown can be reached at [marlenebrown@ocn.me](mailto:marlenebrown@ocn.me).



Woodmoor Improvement Association, Jan. 27

# Board shares annual report, organizes for 2021

By Jackie Burhans

The Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) board canceled its Annual Meeting due to COVID-19 restrictions but provided an annual report. WIA met on Jan. 27 to organize the board, set meeting dates, and approve authorizations for finance, architectural control, and forestry.

## Annual report

In lieu of an in-person annual meeting this year, WIA posted an annual report on its website at <https://www.woodmoor.org/wia-annual-meeting-presentation/>. The report covered the role of WIA, named the 2020 board of directors, listed the WIA and Woodmoor Public Safety (WPS) staff, highlighted achievements, and summarized income and expenses.

Accomplishments for 2020 included a modest renovation of the Barn, a new trail at the Marsh open space, seven new pet poop stations in the common areas with contracted service, continued support for the Safe Route to Schools grant, a \$245,000 mitigation matching grant for the Woodmoor Drive corridor, three free-to-residents chipping days, and five academic scholarships of \$1,000 each.

Objectives for 2021 include maintaining WIA’s commitment to the Firewise program, developing trails in common areas, maintaining community standards, remaining engaged on the Walters property proposed development by Proterra, and continuing to digitize WIA files.

The annual report detailed services offered by WPS including officer response, vacation checks, crime prevention, and traffic control. WPS offers 24/7 patrols, uses a radio system that communicates directly with other lo-

cal first responders, and leverages body-worn cameras to record community interactions.

Good neighbor awards were given to three families. The Ditzler family was nominated for yard assistance and watching over neighbors during the COVID pandemic. The Northway family was recognized for helping with fire mitigation and snow removal. The Kenny family was acknowledged for their assistance navigating icy roads, interviewing care givers, and assistance upon return from hospitalization.

## Board reorganization

At the Jan. 27 meeting, the board, anticipating that returning board members would be re-elected, affirmed the following board member roles:

- Brian Bush, president
- Peter Billie, vice president
- Rick DePaiva, secretary and community outreach
- Connie Brown, treasurer
- Per Suhr, Architectural Control
- Brad Gleason, Public Safety
- Bert Jean, Common Areas
- Ed Miller, Covenant Control
- Tom Smith, Forestry

The board unanimously approved financial account authorizations as well as dates and times for board meeting, covenant hearings, and Architectural Control Committee (ACC) meetings. They also approved continued authority for the ACC administrator, Bob Pearsall, to approve certain miscellaneous projects and routine change orders, and they appointed committee members. The board approved authority for the forestry administrator, Matthew Nelson, to review and approve all tree requests and Firewise evaluations, and appointed

committee members.

## Board highlights

- President Bush reported that WIA is doing well financially despite a decrease in income and congratulated the staff on holding down expenses to achieve budget goals.
- Director Miller reported eight confirmed violations, 27 letters sent about non-compliant signs, 17 homeowners association checks, and one \$5,000 fine for an open fire.
- Nelson said the fire mitigation grant for the Woodmoor Drive corridor is going well with 16 lots in progress. The first round of reimbursement checks is being processed for \$15,000 worth of mitigation.
- Bush noted that Nelson served as the Firewise coordinator for the Northern El Paso Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO) as well and had helped them qualify for a \$245,000 grant.
- Pearsall reported that renovation work on The Barn was essentially complete and within budget for the window replacements and roof work.

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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 is scheduled for Feb. 24.

The WIA calendar can be found at [www.woodmoor.org/wia-calendar/](http://www.woodmoor.org/wia-calendar/). WIA board meeting minutes can be found at [www.woodmoor.org/meeting-minutes/](http://www.woodmoor.org/meeting-minutes/) once approved and posted.

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

# January Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

Overall, it was a pretty normal January, which means long periods of dry conditions interrupted by several quick-moving cold fronts. Temperatures for the month were slightly warmer than normal, mainly supported by warmer-than-normal low temperatures. Precipitation was near normal, both snowfall and liquid equivalent.

Not surprisingly, the month started off dry and mild, with temperatures above normal from the 1st through the 7th. Of course, above normal in the first week of January is still relatively cold, as highs were in the mid-30s to mid-40s each afternoon. The only moisture we saw that first week was some brief light flurries on the afternoon of the 5th.

Finally, during the second week of the month, a more organized storm system moved through and brought some measurable snowfall and below-normal temperatures. The first signs of this storm moved in just after midnight on the 9th, as areas of fog, low clouds, and flurries developed just after 2 a.m. Light snow developed around mid-morning and continued most of the day, with 3-5 inches of new snowfall accumulating around the region through the evening of the 9th. Temperatures were held below freezing all day as well, with highs only reaching the mid-20s. Light snow and flurries continued through just after midnight on the 10th,

before the storm moved out of the region. The fresh snow and low January sun angle kept temperatures below normal on the 10th as well, as highs again struggled to reach the mid-20s.

The weather pattern again turned dry and mild as high pressure moved back in over the next week. Temperatures jumped to well above normal on the 12th and 13th, peaking in the mid-50s on the afternoon of the 13th. Temperatures dipped back to normal levels from the 14th through the 17th. A quick-moving storm brought areas of light snow and flurries off and on from the morning of the 18th through the early morning of the 19th. Unfortunately, less than an inch accumulated, barely enough to produce any measurable moisture.

Behind this system, quiet and dry conditions again took hold, with highs in the mid-40s to low 50s from the 20th through the 23rd. However, another colder system moved in starting late on the 23rd, with low clouds developing just before midnight. Low clouds, fog, and flurries were entrenched all day on the 24th, with highs barely reaching the low 20s. The layers of fog allowed a thick layer of rime ice to coat all exposed surfaces.

Finally, the main system began to affect the region starting during the early morning hours of the 25th, with

snow developing and continuing all day. Most of us received 3-6 inches of new snow during this period. Snow tapered off to flurries during the early morning hours before an uptick again occurred starting around 8 a.m. on the 26th and continuing through that evening. Another 1-3 inches accumulated during that period.

Altogether, most of us picked up a decent shot of snow and moisture with this storm.

Dry and mild conditions quickly returned to end the month, with highs jumping back to well-above-normal levels on the 28th and 29th, reaching well into the 50s both afternoons. Temperature did cool back to normal levels on the last two days of the month as a storm moved through, but this time the snow stayed in the mountains and we were left dry.

## A look ahead

February is often a dry and cold month for the region as we move toward the snowy and unsettled conditions of March and April. Precipitation averages less than an inch, with average high temperatures in the 30s. It can get very cold in February with Arctic air making brief pushes into the region. However, days begin to get a little longer, which leads to some nice, sunny days and the snow that does fall begins



to melt faster.

January 2021 Weather Statistics

Average High	40.5° (+0.4°)
100-year return frequency value max	48.4° min 30.8°
Average Low	16.5° (+3.9°)
100-year return frequency value max	26.6° min 6.6°
Highest Temperature	58° on the 29th

Lowest Temperature	2° on the 27th
Monthly Precipitation	0.57" (-0.14" 20% below normal)
100-year return frequency value max	1.56" min 0.01"
Monthly Snowfall	12.0" (-3.3", 10% below normal)
Season to Date Snow	37.0"

Season to Date Precip.	1.66" (-13.8", 30% below normal)
Heating Degree Days	1132 (+35)
Cooling Degree Days	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 31.

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

Tri-Lakes community deserves thanks

"Every penny counts, merry Christmas and God bless," I said frequently in December. I was a bell ringer for the Salvation Army at Safeway in Monument. The contributions were only outweighed by the kindness of the people going in and out as well as the entire staff at Safeway. It was a joy to hear from the Salvation Army that our kettle was always full, and every penny stays in El Paso County to help the needy.

John Howe

Anonymous D38 ad criticized

As a former District 38 board president, local businessperson, and member of many local boards, I was dismayed that you would publish an anonymous ad from the District 38 Parents and Taxpayers. They obviously don't represent the community majority, and they represent opinions best found in obscure conspiracy sites.

I am all for the First Amendment, but I also think your advertising department used poor discretion in publishing an advertisement so obviously inflammatory and misrepresenting the community. My hope is that in the future names are required on such advertisements. I am writing this as a complaint to your advertising department. I realize that you are a volunteer organization, and as such I recognize you fulfill a valuable role in the community. The ad was not representative of how you have conducted business for the last 20-plus years.

David J. Jones DDS

Editor's note: At OCN's annual meeting in January, the OCN volunteers approved a change in our ad policy to now require that ads identify in some way what business, individual, or registered group placed the ad.

Misguided resolution by Monument trustees

I am not a resident of Monument, but I live nearby and use its many stores, shops, services, etc., so I would like to offer some thoughts about the town's recent Resolution No. 08-2021, "reasserting the rights of the town and its residents and condemning the unconstitutional limitations imposed upon their freedoms by the governor of Colorado."

While I find it to contain valid points, it also cherry-picks various governing documents to validate its conclusions (space limitations restrict examples). Yes, why are some entities considered essential while others are not? A valid question. But is the correct solution to allow all Monument churches, clubs, schools, gym, and bars, etc. to disregard reasonable and presumably well-thought-out limitations implemented by our state and county health authorities?

I support the local businesses and want them to prosper; they are vital to the local economy and wellbeing of the residents of the Tri-Lakes region. But we must acknowledge that we are in the midst of a deadly pandemic, wherein the

real experts tell us to wear masks while in public, avoid large crowds, travel long distances only when truly important, and get vaccinated as soon as possible. Regrettably, too many of us ignore these guidelines, thereby selfishly placing others in danger.

The aforementioned resolution is in many ways misguided, inappropriately political, and unjustly critical of our governor. We're all in this together, and we need to pull together. Ignoring our leader's directives and declaring that "That the Town of Monument will not abide by any Executive Orders limiting attendance of and free speech at public meetings within the town" is wrong. It should be rescinded.

Ross Meyer

Monument welcomes COVID

As a Tri-Lakes area resident who has supported the businesses in this town throughout the last three decades, I was shocked when I read that Resolution No. 80-2021 passed with a 7-0 ratio. Everyone with investments in this community should read this resolution very closely and decide whether the assertions put forth are in accordance with your values, knowledge base, and understanding of how our community should function and be represented during and after this pandemic.

As citizens of a responsible community, we all need to strive for the values all Americans hold dear: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These values are our common ground. We must use our God-given intellect, paired with substantial evidence-based science and our natural ability to adapt to challenging circumstances and simply do what is right.

Science has proven how viruses spread, reproduce, and mutate. Restrictions mandated by our government are based on this science and are focused not on political aspirations but, instead, on the promotion of public and individual health. They are designed to normalize community financial stability and to enable us to return to a reality where fulfillment of our needs for human interaction are safely achieved.

Viruses have a couple of billion years' head start on humanity in the survival game. They have only one goal: reproduction. Humans have developed intellect and cooperation as our basic survival mechanisms and this, with faith, will see us through. We all need to follow science-based protocols known to limit the spread of disease such as proper wearing of masks, social distancing, vaccination, and limitations on indoor activities that promote infection. When these proven measures are rejected, COVID-19 cases will surge. If we refuse to follow science, our people and businesses will continue to suffer the ravages of COVID-19.

Sharann Mills

Monument Board of Trustees "irresponsible" for considering pandemic sanctuary city

I would like to say how appalled I am by several members of the Monument Board of Trustees' comments about considering Monument as a pandemic sanctuary city. Trustee Jim Romanello said we should "open our businesses, go to

church, go to temple, stand and, if necessary, fight for what is right." Trustee Mitch LaKind saying for businesses to "ignore the red (severe risk) level." How irresponsible are these views? We have almost a half-million deaths in the U.S.A., most hospital ICU beds are at maximum capacity, refrigerator trucks are being used to house the deceased, millions of people are traveling on planes and catching/spreading COVID, ambulances bringing sick patients are having to wait hours to get their patients admitted or seen at the hospital, and many other horrible facts.

Yes, I know that businesses are suffering monetarily. In my own extended family, there are several businesses that are also suffering huge losses. But we need to be responsible citizens of the world and follow the rules, not just for ourselves, but for the good of mankind. I have not seen my children or grandchildren for 12 months, but sacrifices need to be made.

Please be good citizens of the world and wait until this horrible worldwide pandemic is under control and then return to enjoying our lives in a normal way.

Marina Nelson

Upset over town's COVID-19 response and anonymous ad

Having lived in Monument, as a friend says, "since the earth was cooling" and a native, I was concerned about the Board of Trustees' newest resolution regarding disregarding state and health departments' recommendations for the fight against COVID-19! Especially since correspondence sent to them was brushed off as "not pertinent!" Color me silly, but I thought the board was there to actually listen to their constituents!

Don't get me wrong, the plight of small businesses is past an emergency situation! My own business has not earned a cent since this pandemic began, and I do not qualify for any Cares Act funds because I had no income in January and February!

The town is also upfront about if a business goes through with following their resolution, they cannot help them! I feel this resolution may do more harm than good and actually drive potential customers away who wish to stay healthy from Monument!

On another subject, I was appalled to see an ad by "concerned citizens and Taxpayers!"

First, if you are truly concerned and feel good about what you are saying, then why the need for secrecy?

Second, I am a parent, grandparent, taxpayer, and great-grandparent. The teachers in our district are coping with a situation a saint would have difficulty with! I feel my grandkids are getting the best possible education under the circumstances! These teachers are being stretched to their limits and they keep on keeping on!

Would my grandkids like to be with their friends? Darn straight. But they are resilient and they realize what needs to happen for all of us to be safe and be able to have fun stuff down the road!

Shame on all of you "Concerned Parents" who can't even own your feelings publicly!

Claudia Swenson ■

Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

Gobsmacked (astounded) by nature

By the staff at Covered Treasures

"I go to books and to nature as the bee goes to a flower, for a nectar that I can make into my own honey."

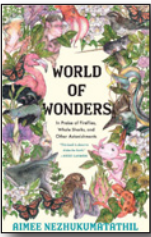
—John Burroughs

Here are some books that will help you get gobsmacked by nature.

World of Wonders: In Praise of Fireflies, Whale Sharks, and Other Astonishments

By Aimee Nezhukumatathil (Milkweed Editions) \$25

Award-winning poet Aimee Nezhukumatathil brings readers a collection of essays about the natural world and the way its inhabitants can teach, support, and inspire us. For this is the way with wonder: It requires that we are curious enough to look past the distractions to fully appreciate the world's gifts. Warm, lyrical, and gorgeously illustrated, this is a book of sustenance and joy.



Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants

By Robin Wall Kimmerer (Milkweed Editions) \$18

Robin Wall Kimmerer is a botanist and a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. She brings these two lenses of knowledge together to show us how nature offers gifts and lessons. Also available is a new 40th anniversary, updated hardcover special edition. It is beautifully bound with a new

cover, bookmark ribbon, deckled edge, and colored illustrations.

Native American Prayer Trees of Colorado

By John Wesley Anderson (Old Colorado City Historical Society) \$37.95

Local author John Wesley Anderson takes his readers on a journey of discovery through his study of the Native American tradition of modifying trees for navigational, medicinal, burial, educational, and spiritual purposes. He worked in close association with members and elders of the Southern Ute Reservation, the study of previous researchers, and people familiar with these culturally modified trees, to create this work which moves forth the documentation and preservation of these landmarks.

Easy Hikes to the Hidden Past

By Rocky Shockley and T. Duran Jones (Rocky Shockley) \$14.99

This unique book offers well-researched, often hidden, historic discoveries with easy trail walks, hikes, and bike rides. It covers Colorado Springs, Manitou Springs, Cripple Creek, Cañon City, and Palmer Lake, and features photos, trail maps, and fun history trivia.

The Soul of an Octopus: A Surprising Exploration into the Wonder of Consciousness

By Sy Montgomery (Atria) \$16.99

In pursuit of the wild, solitary, predatory octopus, natural-

ist Sy Montgomery has befriended octopuses with strikingly different personalities from New England aquarium tanks to the reefs of French Polynesia and the Gulf of Mexico. This award-winning bestseller explores the emotional and physical world of the complex, intelligent octopus and the remarkable connections it makes with humans and what they can teach us.

Our Wild Calling: How Connecting with Animals Can Transform Our Lives—and Save Theirs

By Richard Low (Algonquin Books) \$16.95

Louv interviews researchers, theologians, wildlife experts, indigenous healers, psychologists, and others to show how people are connecting with animals in ancient and new ways, and how this serves as an antidote to the growing epidemic of human loneliness; how dogs can teach children ethical behavior; how animal-assisted therapy may yet transform the mental health field; and what role the human-animal relationship plays in our spiritual health. He reports on wildlife relocation and how the growing populations of wild species in urban areas are blurring the lines between domestic and wild animals.

Migrations

By Charlotte McConaghy (Flatiron Books) \$26.99

Franny Stone has always been the kind of woman who is able to love but unable to stay. Leaving behind everything but her research gear, she arrives in Greenland with a singular purpose: to follow the last arctic terns in the world on



what might be their final migration to Antarctica. But as Franny's history begins to unspool, it becomes clear that she is chasing more than just the birds. It's an ode to a disappearing world and a breathtaking page-turner about the possibility of hope

against all odds.

**Natural Wonders of Colorado**

By Todd Caudle (Skyline Press) \$12.95  
As local photographer Todd Caudle says in his introduction, this collection "is the

vision of one photographer who loves his home state with a passion and cannot even conceive of a day when he will not actively seek out its beauty, whether with a camera or not. It is also a snapshot of what Colorado currently is, and in some places, what it

used to be."  
Until next month, happy reading.  
The staff at Covered Treasures can be contacted at books@ocn.me.

February Library Events

Library reopens with limited services; adult reading program begins

By Harriet Halbig

Beginning in mid-January, the Monument Library reopened to a limited number of patrons at a time. Patrons are welcome to come in and claim their holds and browse the collection for new reading and viewing materials. Computers are available and, although a reservation is no longer required, they must be booked with a staff member before use.

Curbside service remains available. You can call 488-2370 ahead of your arrival and find your materials outside or simply drop by and ring the doorbell on the shelf

near the door and we will come to you.

Some furniture has been reintroduced for those who might wish to come and read the newspaper. We do, however, request that you keep your visit relatively brief.

All programs are cancelled until further notice, and meeting rooms remain unavailable.

Masks are required for all patrons age 3 and older, and social distancing is also required.

The 2021 Winter Adult Reading Program begins on Feb. 1 and continues through March 31. You may register online

at the district website, ppld.org, or come in and register in person.

The program is a bit different this year. Rather than logging titles of books read, this year participants log reading in 30-minute increments and can also participate in a variety of activities for credit toward prizes.

After 15 reading segments or activities, you will receive a set of reusable utensils and a Rocky Mountain Chocolate bar. After another 15 days of reading or activities, you will receive the annual program mug and a chance for a drawing for the grand prize. At least 15 of the entries must be for reading.

Activities are listed on the website and include a number of craft projects made from kits available and reading a book in an unfamiliar genre or writing a review.

Current hours for the Monument Library are 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 10 through 5 on Friday and Saturday. The library is closed on Sunday.

We hope to see you soon at the library.  
Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me.

On the Trail (in memory of Tim Watkins)

Ham radio from the mountaintop

By Lisa Hatfield

On New Year's Day, a group from the Tri-Lakes Monument Radio Association climbed Mt. Herman, elevation 9,063 feet, with radios and portable antennas. Some of them used High Frequency (HF) radio and Morse code to contact amateur radio operators on both coasts of the U.S. and even one in France. Others used Very High Frequency (VHF) radios to make local contacts from Monument to Peyton, Rocky Flats, and even a peak-to-peak contact with Mount Flora, a 13,000-foot mountain near Georgetown.

The universal purpose of amateur (ham) radio is to have fun messing around with radios. It's for non-commercial use, and all operators need an FCC license. It can provide emergency public service communications in times of disaster. But what

keeps hams' batteries charged in between times?

One competitive incentive is Summits on the Air (SOTA), an award scheme for radio amateurs that encourages local and international portable amateur radio operations that promote emergency awareness and communications in mountainous areas. A similar program, Parks on the Air (POTA), awards points for communications from national and state parks.

Monument resident Joyce Witte recently earned her "Mountain Goat" Award in SOTA after activating on 187 peaks over the last four years. There are awards for activators (those who ascend to the summits) and chasers (who either operate from home, a local hilltop or are even activators on other summits).

Mt. Herman is the most (ham) radio-active peak in Colorado, largely due to Steve Galchutt, whose call sign is WG0AT. He's been hiking with his goats and playing radio from the summit for 25 years, over a decade before SOTA came to North America.

For more information, see https://w0t1m.org/, or Amateur Radio W0TLM under Weekly and Monthly Events on page 30.

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

Right: John Roach (left) logs contacts and Joyce Witte calls on ham radio at the top of Mt. Herman on Jan. 1. Photo by Lisa Hatfield.



High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

February gardening: free flowers, free food

By Janet Sellers

"We are a product of our landscape—good landscapes make good food, good food makes clever and healthy people."  
—Patrick Padden

Edible landscaping

We can't eat the lawn, but lawns are the largest crop in the United States—while less than 2 percent of our population does farming! A productive edible landscape can be very beautiful, filled with flowers, wafting scents of lemon thyme or mint, with perennials easiest to care for. Edible landscapes need good planning—they go to seed, need prudent care and placement for ongoing good looks—but no mowing! Berry bushes, herbal groundcovers, and most salad greens thrive here year-round, even tomatoes kept as perennials will overwinter in indoor pots and debut in June.

Companion planting

For years I've used marigolds and spear-

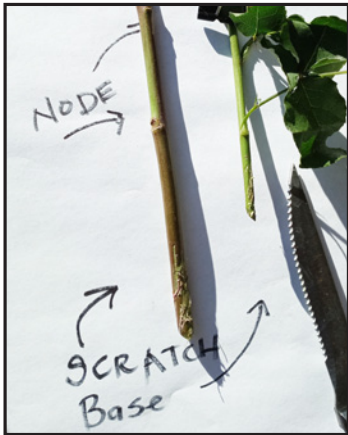
mint to keep pests out of the garden, and the year that we did square-foot gardening with companion planting we had the best yields at Monument Community Garden, experimenting for local gardening success and companion planting of plant "friends" multiplied the harvests manifold.

Air layering for trees and shrubs—free plants

This year, I'm going to try air layering for my flowering crabapple instead of pruning and pitching the branches. In spring, as the trees enter their growth cycle, I'll choose a branch still on the tree, peel back the bark about 2 to 3 inches all the way around, wrap that in moist sphagnum moss, secure with twine and wrap with plastic. Rooting takes two to four weeks or up to three months. Cutting it off below the new roots, I can pot or plant it in the yard. I'm actually hoping to do several from my pink crabapple and from my apricot tree and roses, too. Many

plants will propagate this way.

Janet Sellers is an avid, thrifty lazy gardener—letting Mother Nature do the hard work—saving seeds and bouquet stems all year. Send your gardening tips for our area to JanetSellers@ocn.me.



Art Matters

Van Gogh and the deadly blank canvas

By Janet Sellers

February is one of the coldest months of the year in our area. In light of that, I thought I would share some of my warm and favorite thoughts on Vincent van Gogh, who is still able to warm the hearts of the world over 130 years after his death.

"Just slap anything on when you see a blank canvas staring you in the face like some imbecile. You don't know how paralyzing that is, that stare of a blank canvas, which says to the painter, 'You can't do a thing'. The canvas has an idiotic stare and mesmerizes some painters so much that they turn into idiots themselves. Many painters are afraid in front of the blank canvas,

but the blank canvas is afraid of the real, passionate painter who dares and who has broken the spell of 'you can't' once and for all."—Letter to Theo van Gogh, October 1884

Vincent van Gogh also wrote of himself, "In both figure and landscape ... I want to get to the point where people say of my work: that man feels deeply, that man feels keenly..." and indeed, he made it to worldly and financial success for all time, but not in his lifetime. He sold only one painting during his life, yet nowadays they go for many millions of dollars to collectors who can see the value in the beautiful works that reflect his heart and soul.

Van Gogh is supportive in his letters

to his brother Theo, and even when things seem hopeless, the man found a way out of the terror of the blank page and into extraordinary beauty to share with us. Van Gogh considered painting to be more gratifying than drawing, but he maintained, "it is absolutely necessary to be able to draw the right proportion and the position of the object pretty correctly before one begins. If one makes mistakes in this, the whole thing comes to nothing."

Drawing is where the thinking and observation occurs, where the planning and the effort and the struggle reside. The word "drawing" means to obtain, to take in, to search. In making drawings, the artist is searching and struggling and obtaining the desired result. Drawing is the core of visual

thinking, the light in the dark and the cure for the blank canvas. Cognoscenti art collectors often seek out and savor the drawings of artists as much or more than paintings and other works.

The essence of drawing, of putting down thoughts in forms, and even going over those forms on the page to get it just right, is fascinating to witness, and it is ours to see in historic and contemporary drawings. It is the visible trail of the mind's path of imagination.

Janet Sellers is an artist who makes lots of stuff: drawings, paintings, large scale street murals, sculptures, and photographs. Contact her at JanetSellers@ocn.me





Snapshots of Our Community

TreeCycle, Jan. 2



**Above:** Lewis-Palmer High School student Reese Thornton and his mother, Kelly Thornton, help raise money for the lacrosse sports team working at Treecycle again this year. The team took in over 1,200 Christmas trees from area residents, and with the suggested donation of \$5 a tree, raised \$6,284 at the Baptist Road location. Steve Czarnecki, executive director, Colorado Springs Youth Sports (a 501C3 charitable nonprofit organization) reported that a record \$25,000 was raised county-wide. For more information, Czarnecki can be reached at [steve@csyouthports.org](mailto:steve@csyouthports.org). Cash donations are still being accepted at [www.givebutter.com/tree](http://www.givebutter.com/tree). *Photo by Marlene Brown.*

Red Kettle donations, Jan. 14



**Above:** On Jan. 14, Monument Hill Kiwanis Club (MHKC), presented a \$35,889 check to The Salvation Army Colorado Springs Corps (SA). Although COVID limited the number of bell ringing days and available ringers, the check represents a two-fold increase in the generosity of the Tri-Lakes citizenry. MHKC volunteers rang the bell at Monument Walmart and King Soopers, assisted by volunteers from Kiwanis Key Clubs from Lewis-Palmer and Palmer Ridge High Schools, Scout Troop 17, Woodmen Valley Chapel, Tri-Lakes Women's Club, and others. Donations benefit Salvation Army programs throughout El Paso County. From left are LaShan Harrison, SA Corps assistant and kettle coordinator; Captains Doug and Betzy Hanson, SA Corps Command; Jack Fry, MHKC president; Ron Mangiarelli, MHKC Red Kettle project manager; and Max Williams, MHKC director, Service Leadership Programs. *Photo by Sharon Williams.*

Devon's Dog Park



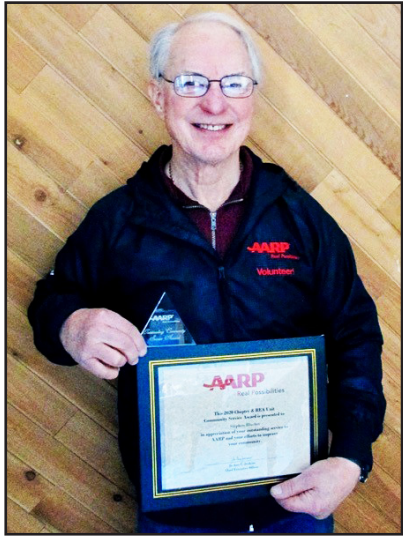
**Above:** Devon's Dog Park was established by Devon Theune in 2008 to earn her Girl Scout Gold Award, in cooperation with the Douglas County Division of Open Space. She said, "I hope to be the kind of person my dog thinks I am." The 15-acre fenced park makes a 2/3-mile loop and shares a parking lot with the Greenland Open Space Trailhead at 1532 Noe Road, Larkspur. Containers at the gates provide a convenient place for people to clean up after their dogs, which is vital for keeping E. coli out of the watershed. No water, shade, or separate area for small dogs is provided, but there is a separate dog agility playground with a tunnel, ramps, and other obstacles for well-trained dogs to maneuver. *Photo by Lisa Hatfield.*

Vaccine at JCSL, Jan. 11



**Left:** On Jan. 11, Walgreens pharmacy visited Jackson Creek Senior Living as planned to administer the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine to staff and residents who wanted it. Administrator Dena Mackey receives the shot from Leslie Mattorano, PharmD. The second shot will be administered on Feb. 1. *Photo by the staff at JCSL. Caption by John Howe.*

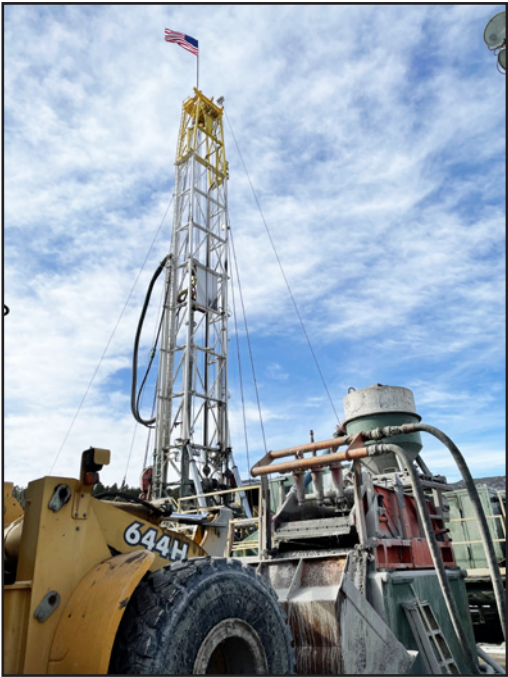
Blucher honored, Jan. 15



**Left:** Stephen Blucher of Colorado Springs received the annual AARP Chapter and Retired Educators Association (REA) Unit Community Service Award for 2020 on Jan. 15. The award is based on his 2019 activities, but the presentation was delayed because of COVID-19. Among the many things Blucher was honored for is his 22 years as an AARP Driver Safety Instructor. He instructed 303 students in 2019 alone. He also helped with the AARP Chapter 1100 free shredding event last June, part of his extensive support of the Black Forest chapter. *Photos provided by Stanley Beckner.*

New Monument well, Jan. 19

**Right:** And then there were 10. Drilling of Well 10 finished Jan. 19. Monument's newest well is adjacent to water treatment plant 4/5 on North Monument Lake Road. Assistant Public Works Director Stephen Sheffield says they anticipate the well will provide "anywhere from 200-300 gallons per minute" once it's operating in "early to mid-summer." He says the well was drilled into the Arapahoe aquifer at about 1,700 feet deep. There's still more work to do, including equipping the well with pipe, a pump, and motor. Sheffield says they're waiting on the design process for treating the water, which has to be approved by Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. *Photo by Michael Weinfeld.*



Baker: Business Person of the Year

**Right:** Christian Brothers Automotive has earned the title of 2020 Business Person of the Year. The award is presented by the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce. It's based on the year's accomplishments, employee development, customer service, community involvement, volunteerism, and social responsibility. There was a tie for the award. Christian Brothers owners Kyle, left, and Carrie Baker shared it with Steve Fisher of Heartland Payment Systems. Kyle Baker said he's "humbled" to get the award, which he said "carries an immense amount of meaning to us." *Photo provided by Jessica Tcholakov.*



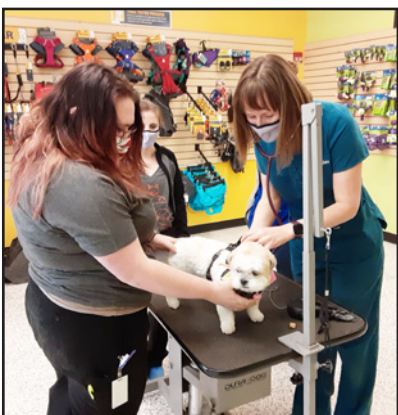


## Jarrito Loco relocating



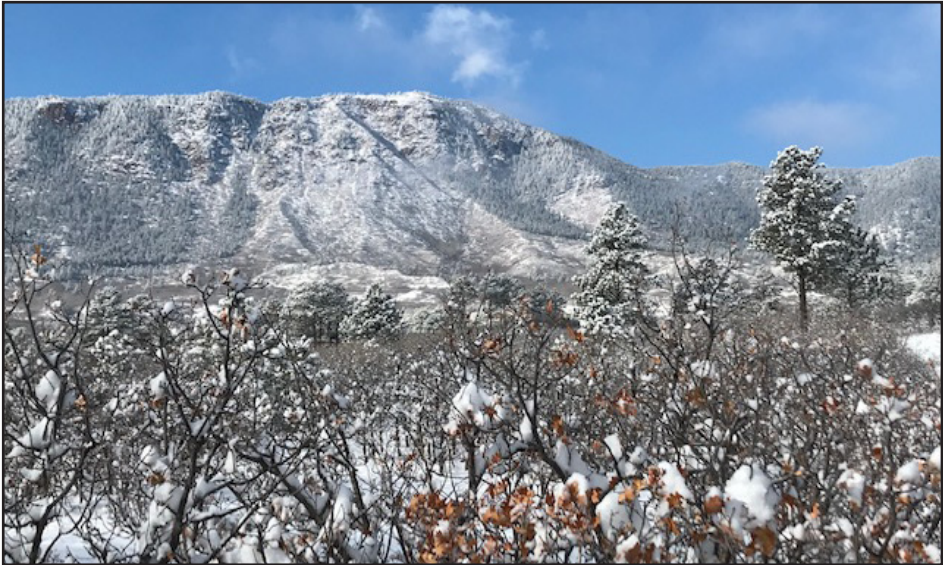
**Above:** Jarrito Loco will move from its current location at 582 W. Highway 105 to the site of the former Village Inn at 315 N. Highway 105. The Village Inn closed a year ago. Jarrito Loco's sign went up Jan. 7. Owner Angel Jimenez says the new site will be about three times bigger than their current place, where they've been since April 2018. He says they hope to open at the new spot before Valentine's Day. In the meantime, they're looking for someone to sublease their current location. *Photo by Michael Weinfeld.*

## Pet shot clinic, Jan. 23



**Left:** Harley (dog pictured) is being good as the staff is getting ready to give another shot Jan. 23 at the Animal Vaccine Clinic, offered by Dr. Jessa Kocher, veterinarian and owner of Fox Run Veterinary Hospital and cohosted by Wag N' Wash, at the Wag N' Wash location in Jackson Creek Crossing. They offered low-cost vaccines to area residents for their pets and donated a portion of the money made at the clinic to the Monument Academy Parent Teacher Organization. "We look forward to supporting other organizations in the area several times a year with our vaccine clinics," said Dr. Kocher. Todd of Red Truck Cakery baked and donated dog biscuits as a parting gift for the patients. For more information, contact Dr. Kocher at [foxrunvethospital.com](http://foxrunvethospital.com) or [Wagnwash.com/monument](http://Wagnwash.com/monument). Watch for more events this year. *Photo by Marlene Brown.*

## OCN photo contest winners



**Above:** A heavy blanket of snow makes hiking and biking more challenging in Monument on Jan. 10. When heading outdoors and especially in winter conditions, remember to let family and friends know where you are going and how long you plan to be gone. *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*

**Right:** I often walk our labradoodle, Fenway, along the shore at Monument Lake. She loves the smells; I love to see the day-to-day changes in the lake and Mt. Herman. On the morning of Dec. 30 last year, I was treated to a full moon over the mountain and one red ice fishing hut on the lake. It's a good thing I snapped the photo when I did. The moon set behind the mountain seconds later. *Photo by Michael Weinfeld.*



**Keep them coming!** Send your best "Life in Tri-Lakes" photo to [editor@ocn.me](mailto:editor@ocn.me) no later than **Feb. 19**. Please don't send more than two photos. Include names of

any people in the photo, date taken, a description of the activity or location, and the name of the photographer. Call Lisa at 719-339-7831 with questions.

## Our Community Notices

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

### Feeling hopeless, anxious, or depressed?

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

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

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

### COVID vaccine information

In El Paso County, vaccination phase 1B.2 begins **Feb. 8** and vaccination phases 1A and 1B are now underway. Phase 1B.2 includes seniors ages 65-69, preK-12 educators, and licensed childcare providers. Phase 1A includes highest-risk health care workers; Phase 1B includes seniors 70-plus, first responders, mid-level risk healthcare workers, and other specific groups. Until the vaccine is more widely available, it's critical that everyone, including those who have already received the vaccine, continues to fol-

low prevention measures to slow the spread of the virus: wear a mask, practice social distancing, wash hands frequently, and stay home when sick. Colorado residents may call 303-389-1687 or 877-462-2911 for more information on the vaccine, **Mon.-Fri.** 9 a.m.-10 p.m., and **weekends** 9 a.m.-5 p.m. To learn more about local efforts and providers, visit El Paso County Public Health's website, [www.elpasocountyhealth.org](http://www.elpasocountyhealth.org).

### The Y's new virtual wellness platform

Join your favorite YMCA instructors for on-line health, wellness, and fitness classes; stream thousands of classes with BurnAlong. Find out more at [ppymca.org/so-muchmore](http://ppymca.org/so-muchmore). See ad on page 6.

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

TLWC is holding a virtual fundraiser, a pet photo contest with cash prizes. The contest is from **Jan. 14**, 6 a.m., to **Feb. 14**, 9 p.m. Enter your cat or dog (\$10 per entry, \$1 per vote) at <http://gogophotocontest.com/whodoyoulovecatordog>. See ad on page 11.

### Tri-Lakes Women's Club 2021 Grant Process

The Tri-Lakes Women's Club's (TLWC) grant application for 2021 will be available **Feb. 15 -Mar. 31**, 2021 on the club's website, [www.tlwc.net](http://www.tlwc.net). Organizations eligible to apply include nonprofits, public service organizations, and public schools that serve the Tri-Lakes area. The application package includes instructions as well as other important qualifying information. Since 1973, TLWC has provided over \$1 million in grant funds to local organizations. Tri-Lakes Women's Club serves to strengthen the foundation of the Tri-Lakes community through its volunteer service and annual grantmaking. For more information, email

Shelley Pruett, [Granting@tlwc.net](mailto:Granting@tlwc.net), or visit [www.tlwc.net](http://www.tlwc.net).

### McCord's Garden Center reopens Feb. 16

Spring is on its way. The garden center, located at 2720 McShane Dr., Monument, will reopen **Feb. 16**. For more information, call 719-375-3573 or visit [www.mccordgardens.com](http://www.mccordgardens.com). See ad on page 5 for a landscaping project gift certificate.

### Help snowplows clear our roads

When there is the threat of 2 or more inches or enough sleet, snow, or ice to cause a solid coating of ice on any street, help the plow drivers by parking your vehicles in your driveway or parking lot. Please refrain from parking on town streets. This is especially important on residential streets and cul-de-sacs. Due to the size of the plow trucks, sometimes it is nearly impossible to maneuver them around parked vehicles on the road. If you are parked and blocking a safe pass for our plow drivers, police officers must knock on doors to have owners move their vehicle(s). This action could be time consuming and take officers away from their primary function, to keep you and your property safe. Please help out and keep your vehicles off the road before, during, and after snowstorms.

### Sign up for Town of Monument notifications

The Notify Me feature on the town's website allows you to subscribe for topics such as emergency alerts, road closures, weather, etc. Visit Notify Me on the website, [www.townofmonument.org/list.aspx](http://www.townofmonument.org/list.aspx), and sign up for the topics that interest you.

### Volunteer for Monumental Impact

Monumental Impact is a nonprofit in the Tri-Lakes area focused on enabling and supporting high school students in tech-

nology, engineering, and entrepreneurship with experiences and community. Monumental Impact provides opportunities for students to explore these careers and supports Bearbotics in their current competitive build season. The group was founded in 2020 and is now looking for volunteers to serve on the board of directors and/or to serve as mentors in our community. To find out more, call 719-387-7414, email [volunteer@monumentalimpact.org](mailto:volunteer@monumentalimpact.org), or visit <https://monumentalimpact.org/community/>.

### WMMI seeks volunteers

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

### The Sisters of Benet Hill offer spiritual direction

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

### Sisters' Thrift & Boutique is open

The Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery have a shop full of gently used treasures, including clothing and accessories, household items, and small furniture at 8674 N. Union Blvd., Colorado Springs. Store hours are Mon.-Fri., 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m., and Saturdays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. The phone number is 719-282-0316. The shop welcomes donations and volunteers. For more information about Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery visit [www.benethillmonastery.org](http://www.benethillmonastery.org).

**Driver and vehicle services available online and at kiosks**  
Most driver and vehicle services can be







- agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso/meeting/list.
- WEEKLY & MONTHLY EVENTS**
- **Group of Artists (GOA) Meetings at Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA), *SUSPENDED***, Sat., **Feb. 6**, 10 a.m.-noon, 304 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Lively discussions about art topics, general studies on creativity. Meets 1st Sat. each month. Info: 481-0475, info@trilakesarts.org, www.trilakesarts.org.
  - **Monument Hill Kiwanis Club Breakfast Meeting, *Zoom meeting, email info@MHKiwanis.org for details***; every **Sat.**, 9 a.m., Guests are welcome at weekly meetings featuring speakers on a variety of topics and a free continental breakfast at normal meetings. Memberships open to the public. Join the 150+ men & women of the Tri-Lakes area who work together to make a difference for youth and our community. Info: RF Smith, 719-210-4987, www.MHKiwanis.org. See ad on page 3.
  - **Neighborhood Net**, every **Sat.**, 10 a.m. Amateur radio operators practice for emergencies on weekly repeater nets so neighbors can help neighbors. Sign up at www.mereowx.org/neighborhood-net or contactus@mereowx.org.
  - **The Wine Seller Free Wine Tastings, *SUSPENDED***, every **Sat.**, 1-4 p.m., 2805 Roberts Dr., Monument. Info: 719-488-3019, www.thewineseller.net.
  - **Bingo by the American Legion, *SUSPENDED***, every **Sat.**, game sales start at 6 p.m., games start at 7 p.m., the Depot Restaurant, in Palmer Lake. Proceeds go to scholarships and other community support activities. Info: 719-481-8668, http://legionpost9-11.org/.
  - **Lions Clubs Bingo, *SUSPENDED***, every **Sat.**, 10 a.m., and **Wed.**, 7 p.m.; Carefree Bingo, 3440 N. Carefree Circle, Colo. Springs. Tri-Lakes Lions Club's portion of the proceeds benefit those in need in the Tri-Lakes Community. Info: Jim Naylor, 719-481-8741 or www.trilakeslionsclub.org
  - **Lucretia Vaile Museum, *closed for now***, 66 Lower Glenway St., Palmer Lake. Free. The museum houses items of local historical significance. Special displays rotate every 4-6 months. Info: 719-559-0837, PLHS@PalmerDivideHistory.org.
  - **Artful Outdoors**, every **Sat.-Sun.**, 1-3 p.m. and by appointment. Join Janet for weekly art and nature talks and DIY art techniques at local nature and art spots. All ages, good social distancing, masks required, all outdoors for now. Limited to 5 at a time for now. Info: janetsellers@ocn.me, www.StartMyArt.com.
  - **Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church, *The Table On-line Worship livestreams at tlumc.org/live*** every **Sun.**, 8 & 11 a.m. Watch live or on replay: facebook.com/tlumc, youtube.com/tlumc. In-person communion service, 9:30 a.m., registration required. Registration & Info: 719-488-1365, tlumc.org. See ad on page 3.
  - **Fuel Church Sunday Service**, every **Sun.**, Connection 9:30-10 a.m., Service 10 a.m. (live service streaming at www.fuelchurch.org), FB Live 10:40 a.m., Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Non-denominational, spirit led. Info: info@fuel.org, www.fuelchurch.org. See ad on page 12.
  - **Artfully Speaking Toastmasters, *Zoom Meeting ID: 313 403 101 Password: 168997***, every **Mon.**, 5:45 p.m., 4452 North Chestnut St., room 252, Colo. Springs. Guests welcome. Info: Glenn, 719-260-6551; www.artfullyspeaking.toastmastersclubs.org.
  - **Women's A.A. Step Study, *meeting remotely, check for details***, every **Mon.**, 6:30 p.m., Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 Baptist Rd. Park in west lot. Info: 719-360-4306.
  - **Monument Life Recovery Group, *SUSPENDED, check the website***, every **Mon.**, 6:30-8 p.m., The Ascent Church, 1750 Deer Creek Rd. This faith-based support group is for those seeking freedom from all hurts, habits, and hang ups. Daycare provided for children under age 11. Info: 719-481-3600, liferecoverygroups.com/meetings/life-recovery-group-3/.
  - **Monument Hill Kiwanis Bingo, *SUSPENDED***, every **Mon.**, 7:30 p.m., Carefree Bingo, 3440 N. Carefree Circle, Colo. Springs. All proceeds benefit those in need in the Tri-Lakes Community. Info: bingo@mhkiwanis.org.
  - **Senior Citizen Luncheons, *Connections Café sites will have “grab and go” (prepared meals)***. A \$2.25 donation is requested. Please call 719-884-2300 to reserve your meal. Meals on Wheels and Home Delivered Meals will deliver frozen meals for the week to Monument on Wednesdays. Food Pantry offers a “pick up only” model for clients. **Mon.-Fri.**, 12-12:30 p.m., Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. See the menu for the month in the Senior Beat newsletter. Stay for bingo the 2nd Thu. each month. Reservations are requested, phone 719-884-2300.
  - **Western Museum of Mining & Industry (WMMI)**, every **Mon., Wed., Fri., Sat.**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., 225 North Gate Blvd. (I-25 Exit 156 A). Group tours are suspended temporarily. Masks required. Cost: \$11 adults, \$10 military/AAA, \$9 seniors & students, \$6 children 3-12, free to children under 3 & museum members. Info: 719-488-0880, info@wmmi.org, www.wmmi.org.
  - **Tri-Lakes Silver Alliance Thrift Store**, now open **Mon.-Sat.**, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., 755 Hwy 105, Suite N, in the West End Center. All proceeds support Tri-Lakes Senior Programs. Volunteers needed, phone 716-

- 464-6873. To donate furniture, call 719-488-3495 for a pickup. Info: www.TriLakesSeniors.org.
- **Tri-Lakes YMCA Senior Coffee, *SUSPENDED***, every **Tue.**, 9:30-11:30 a.m., 17250 Jackson Creek Pkwy, Monument. Members and non-members are welcome. Socialize, have coffee and snacks in the front lobby. Free. Info: 719-630-2604, hbrandon@ppymca.org, www.ppymca.org.
  - **Adult Children of Alcoholics/Dysfunctional Families Meeting: ACA Promises**, every **Tue.**, 6:30-7:30 p.m. As a child, did you develop a false self in order to survive? See quiz at https://adultchildren.org/newcomer/am-i-an-adult-child/. The solution is learning to re-parent ourselves with gentleness, humor, love, and respect. Meeting both in small group in Monument (need RSVP) + online via Zoom. Call/text Stacey 206-384-8285 www.adultchildren.org (click on Newcomer).
  - **Al-anon Meeting: Monument Serenity, *visit www.al-anon-co.org to find on-line and phone meetings*** every **Tue.**, 7:30-8:30 p.m., Ascent Church (formerly the Tri-Lakes Chapel), 1750 Deer Creek Rd., Monument. Info: Kay, 719-481-9258, www.al-anon-co.org.
  - **Essentrics Fitness Program at Senior Center**, every **Tue.** at 12:30 p.m. & **Thu.** at 8 a.m., Lewis-Palmer High School modular building across from the YMCA, on Jackson Creek Pkwy. Registration & Info: Sue Walker, 719-330-0241.
  - **Peak Reader Children's Literacy Program, *SUSPENDED***, every **Tue. & Thu.**, 5:30-6:30 p.m., Monument Branch Library, 1706 Lake Woodmoor Dr. Free one-to-one tutoring for children reading below grade level. To enroll your child or volunteer as a tutor, visit www.childrensliteracycenter.org or call 719-471-8672.
  - **Tri-Lakes Church of Christ Wednesday Night Fellowship Meal (Free) & Classes, *SUSPENDED***, every **Wed.**, 6-7:30 p.m., 20450 Beacon Lite Road, Monument (Corner of Beacon Lite & County Line Roads). Info: 488-9613, gregsmith@trilakeschurch.org, www.trilakeschurch.org.
  - **Al-anon Meeting: Letting Go, *visit www.al-anon-co.org to find on-line and phone meetings*** every **Thu.**, 9-10:10 a.m., Ascent Church, 1750 Deer Creek Rd., Monument. Info: www.al-anon-co.org.
  - **A.A. Big Book Study, *Call 425-436-6200, access code 575176#*** every **Thu.**, 7 p.m., Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 W. Baptist Rd. Info: 719-481-0431.
  - **The Speedtrap offers Take Out**, 84 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Take out is available 8 a.m.-2 p.m. **daily**. Save time, order online. Gifts and gift cards available, too. Info: 719-488-2007, www.speedtrapbistro.com. See ad on page 5.
  - **Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS), *check website***, every **Fri.**, 8 a.m., Monument Chamber of Commerce, 166 2nd St., Monument. Info: Terry, 719-684-4912, or visit www.TOPS.org.
  - **Chess Nuts**, **Tue., Feb. 9**, 5-9 p.m., Silver Alliance Senior Center, across the street from the YMCA. Any age, any skill. Learners welcome. Drop in and leave when you want. Bring your own board and pieces if you have them. Meets 2nd & 4th Tue. each month. Info: www.TriLakesSeniors.org/chess.
  - **Black Forest AARP Potluck Lunch & Meeting, *all in person AARP activities are canceled through the first quarter of 2021***, **Wed., Feb. 10**, 11:30 a.m., 12455 Black Forest Rd. All ages welcome. Meets 2nd Wed. each month. RSVP & Info: Stan, 596-6787, www.aarp-chapter1100blackforest.weebly.com.
  - **Foot Care Clinic**, **Wed., Feb. 10**, Silver Alliance Senior Center located across the street from the Tri-Lakes YMCA, on the Lewis-Palmer High School campus. A registered nurse examines your feet and provides foot care advice, toenail trimming. Cost: \$30 for a 30-min. visit. Meets 2nd Wed., 3rd and last Fri. each month, by appointment only. Info & appointments: call the Visiting Nurse Association, 719-577-4448.
  - **Bridge, *SUSPENDED***, **Thu., Feb. 11**, 1-4 p.m., Silver Alliance Senior Center, 1300 Higby Rd., Monument. Meets 2nd Thu. each month, Sept.-June. Info: www.trilakeseniors.org/programs/events.html.
  - **Senior Bingo, *SUSPENDED***, **Thu., Feb. 11**, Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake, after the senior lunch. Come for lunch at noon, then stay and play. Free! Prizes! Meets 2nd Thu. each month. Info: Maggie Nealon, 719-488-3037.
  - **Ben Lomond Gun Club, Tri-Lakes Chapter**, **Thu., Feb. 11**, 7 p.m., Tri-Lakes Fire Station 1, 18650 Hwy 105 west of Monument near the bowling alley. Meets 2nd Thu. each month. Info: 719-481-3364.
  - **Silver Center Book Club**, **Fri., Feb. 12**, 11 a.m.-noon, Senior Center located across the street from the Tri-Lakes YMCA, on Lewis-Palmer High School campus. All are welcome. Meets 2nd Fri. each month. Coffee & snacks served. RSVP & Info: Sue, 719-330-0241.
  - **El Paso County Hazardous Materials & Recycling Collection Facility, *appointments required, phone 719-520-7878 or check the website to book online***, **Sat., Feb. 13**, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., 3255 Akers Dr., Colorado Springs. Open the 2nd Sat. each month as well as **Mon.-Thu.**, 7 a.m.-5 p.m., accepts porcelain fixtures, common recyclable items, household hazardous waste, various electronics, and TVs up to 19-inch diagonal. Bring a nonperishable food item for Care and Share. Info: 719-520-7878, communityservices.elpasoco.com/environmental-division.

- **Palmer Lake Art Group, *check the website***, **Sat., Feb. 13**, 9 a.m., Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. A variety of art programs are offered after the social gathering and business meeting. Guests welcome. Meets 2nd Sat. each month. Info: 719-460-4179, www.palmerlakeart-group.com.
- **Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group, *virtual meeting***, **Sat., Feb. 13**, 9:45-11:30 a.m., The First National Bank of Monument, 581 Hwy 105. Meets 2nd Sat. each month. Info: 800-272-3900; communityresourcefinder.org, click on Programs & Events, then on Support Groups, then search by zip code.
- **Amateur Radio W0TLM (Tri-Lakes Monument Radio Association), *check the website***, **Mon., Feb. 15**. All amateur radio operators or those interested in becoming amateur radio operators are welcome. Meets 3rd Mon. Check the website for details. Info: Joyce Witte, 719-661-9824, JoyceWitte@gmail.com; www.W0TLM.com.
- **Gleneagle Sertoma Luncheon Meeting, *SUSPENDED***, **Wed., Feb. 17**, 11:30 a.m., Liberty Heights, 12105 Ambassador Dr., Colo. Springs. Interesting speakers and programs; all are welcome. Meets 1st & 3rd Wed. each month. Info: Garrett Barton, 719-433-5396; Duane Gritzmaker, 719-481-2424; www.gleneagle-sertoma.org.
- **Senior Bingo**, **Wed., Feb. 17**, 1-2 p.m., Silver Alliance Senior Center, Lewis-Palmer High School campus. Masks required. Space is limited to 16 participants; RSVP required. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. RSVP & Info: Sue Walker, 719-464-6873, or email sue@monumentalfitness.
- **Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7829, *via Zoom.com; POC Delbert Zehrung, 559-362-3223***, **Wed., Feb. 17**, 7 p.m., The Country Club at Woodmoor, 18945 Pebble Beach Way, Monument. New members welcome. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: Post Commander Joe Carlson, 405-326-2588, jcarlson@vfw7829.org, www.vfw7829.org.
- **VFW Auxiliary to Post 7829, *meeting by videoconference***, **Wed., Feb. 17**, 7 p.m., The Country Club at Woodmoor, 18945 Pebble Beach Way, Monument. Guests are welcome to join; contact carlsonmkc@aol.com for instructions on how to connect. If you are a male or female relative of a veteran who served on foreign soil during war or other military action, you may be eligible. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: Kathy Carlson, 719-488-1902, carlsonmkc@aol.com.
- **Monumental Impact's Community of Support Collaborative, *virtual meeting***, **Thu., Feb. 18**, 5 p.m. Connect with other businesses involved in technology, engineering, and entrepreneurship or businesses/individuals with an interest in being the Community of Support to high school students in these career pathways. Info: 719-387-7414, enable@monumentalimpact.org, monumentalimpact.org.
- **Palmer Lake Historical Society Meeting, *SUSPENDED***, **Thu., Feb. 18**, 7 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. All are welcome. Meets 3rd Thu. each month. Info: 719-559-0837, www.palmerdividehistory.org.
- **Gleneagle Women's Club, *SUSPENDED***, **Fri., Feb. 19**. Come for lunch, book discussions, bridge, and more. Location for lunch varies. Meets every third Fri., Sept.-June. Info: Syble Krafft, 719-488-2669.
- **Foot Care Clinic**, **Fri., Feb. 19**, Silver Alliance Senior Center located across the street from the Tri-Lakes YMCA, on the Lewis-Palmer High School campus. A registered nurse examines feet and provides foot care advice, toenail trimming. Cost: \$35 for a 30-min. visit. Meets 2nd Wed., 3rd and last Fri. each month, by appointment only. Info & appointments: call the Visiting Nurse Association, 719-577-4448.
- **The Breakfast Club, *SUSPENDED***, **Sat., Feb. 20**, 8:30 a.m., The Ridge at Castle Pines North (Ridge Grill and Bar), 1414 Castle Pines Pkwy. Single people 50+ meet new friends and have fun. Meets 3rd Sat. each month. Info: 303-815-8428, www.TBC50plus.org.
- **Tri-Lakes Parkinson's Disease Support Group, *SUSPENDED; if you need any help, please call Syble or Barry***, **Sat., Feb. 20**, 10 a.m.-noon, Monument Community Presbyterian Church, 238 Third St, Monument. Come for socializing, discussions on Parkinson's-related issues including available support, and occasional speakers. Meets 3rd Sat. each month. Info: Syble Krafft, 719-488-2669; Barry (group president), 719-351-9485.
- **Faithful Friends**, **Sat., Feb. 20**, 3-4:30 p.m., 3254 Forrest Lakes Dr., Monument. This month's discussion topic: "If you could begin again, what would you do or be? (And how would you use that identity and skill set?)" RSVP & Info: Ellen, 303-526-5000.
- **Grief Share Support Group**, **Tue., Feb. 23**, 10:30 a.m.-noon, Tri-Lakes Senior Center, across the street from the YMCA. The Tri-Lakes Silver Alliance has partnered with Colorado Palliative & Hospice Care to host a 13-session grief support group in Monument. Meets last Tue. each month. RSVP & Info: Sue Walker, 719-330-0241.
- **Tri-Lakes Chamber Monthly Education Series: *Employee Retention***, **Tue., Feb. 23**, 11:30 a.m., possibly virtual, 166 Second St., Monument. Free event for members and non-members. Please register for virtual attendance information: www.trilakeschamber.com. Info: 481-3282.



- **Chess Nuts**, Tue., **Feb. 23**, 5-9 p.m., Silver Alliance Senior Center, across the street from the YMCA. Any age, any skill. Learners welcome. Drop in and leave when you want. Bring your own board and pieces if you have them. Meets 2nd & 4th Tue. each month. Info: [www.TriLakesSeniors.org/chess](http://www.TriLakesSeniors.org/chess).
- **Senior Social, all in person AARP activities are canceled through the first quarter of 2021**, Wed., **Feb. 24**, 1-4 p.m., 12455 Black Forest Rd. Meets 4th Wed. each month except Nov. & Dec. Info: [aarpchapter-1100blackforest.weebly.com](mailto:aarpchapter-1100blackforest.weebly.com).
- **Friends of Fox Run Park, Zoom meeting**, Thu., **Feb. 25**, 6-7:30 p.m., Email [friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com](mailto:friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com) and they will email you the link the day of the meeting. Join the growing group to learn about volunteering and supporting the park for safety, trails, trees, education, more. Meets 4th Thu. each month. Info: [marlenebrown@ocn.me](mailto:marlenebrown@ocn.me).
- **Foot Care Clinic**, Fri., **Feb. 26**, Silver Alliance Senior Center located across the street from the Tri-Lakes YMCA, on the Lewis-Palmer High School campus. A registered nurse examines feet and provides foot care advice, toenail trimming. Cost: \$35 for a 30-min. visit. Meets 2nd Wed., 3rd and last Fri. each month, by appointment only. Info & appointments: call the Visiting Nurse Association, 719-577-4448.
- **Group of Artists (GOA) Meetings at Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA), SUSPENDED**, Sat., **Mar. 6**, 10 a.m.-noon, 304 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Lively discussions about art topics, general studies on creativity. Meets 1st Sat. each month. Info: 481-0475, [info@trilakesarts.org](mailto:info@trilakesarts.org), [www.trilakesarts.org](http://www.trilakesarts.org).
- **Lupus Support Group**. If you suffer with an autoimmune disease and want to connect with others, you are welcome to join this group. Info: [dmbandle@hotmail.com](mailto:dmbandle@hotmail.com).
- **Myasthenia Gravis Association** of Colorado Support Group. Location varies. Info: Carolyn, 488-3620, [www.4-mga.org](mailto:www.4-mga.org), 303-360-7080, [4mga@4-mga.org](mailto:4mga@4-mga.org).

SPECIAL EVENTS

- **Palmer Lake Winterfest**, Sat., **Feb. 6**, noon-3 p.m. Hot chocolate and broom ball, bring your own broom. Winterfest hoodies for purchase, \$15, to benefit Palmer Lakes Parks Commission's continued efforts to maintain local parks. Info: [www.townofpalmerlake.com](http://www.townofpalmerlake.com).
- **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Family-to-Family online class**, begins Wed., **Feb. 10**, 6-8:30 p.m. NAMI Family-to-Family is a free, evidence-based program for family, friends and partners of adults with mental health conditions. Find out the latest information on depressive disorders, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and other illnesses, and learn practical skills for coping and advocacy. Teachers are trained peers whose loved ones live with a mental illness. Formerly a 12-week course, it now lasts just eight weeks. Registration required. To register, and/or find out about monthly and weekly online support groups, call 719-473-8477, or visit [www.namicoloradosprings.org](http://www.namicoloradosprings.org).
- **ZOOMobile with Cheyenne Mountain Zoo @ppld.org Online**, Thu., **Feb. 11** (repeats Sat., **Mar. 6**, 1 p.m.). Join PPLD and the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo for a virtual ZOOMobile. Meet five different animal ambassadors and have a live conversation with a keeper. This virtual program will feature appearances by a mammal, amphibian, bird, lizard, and a turtle or tortoise. Info: Heidi Buljung, 719-531-6333 ext. 6034, [hbuljung@ppld.org](mailto:hbuljung@ppld.org).
- **Western Museum of Mining & Industry (WMMI) Speakers' Bureau Monthly Lecture (online)**, Mon., **Feb. 15**. Info: 719-488-0880, [www.wmmi.org](http://www.wmmi.org).
- **Genealogy Basics @PPLD.org Online**, Sat., **Feb. 20**,

- 10-11 a.m. This class provides an introduction to basic genealogy research strategies. Space is limited, so register in advance. There's no cost to participate; all registrants will receive a Zoom link and instructions (via email) in advance. Info: Cara Ramsey, 719- 531-6333 ext. 6035, [cramsey@ppld.org](mailto:cramsey@ppld.org).
- **Covered Treasures Bookstore Booksigning**, Sat., **Feb. 20**, 1-3 p.m., 105 Second St., Monument. Debut author Diane Campbell will sign her mystery, *Point Blank*. Free, open to all, please wear a mask. Info: 481-2665, [www.coveredtreasures.com](http://www.coveredtreasures.com).
  - **Virtual Wine Tasting**, Sat., **Feb. 20**, 7 p.m., at your home. Stay safe at home and enjoy this special virtual wine tasting event. The wine package includes three Colorado wines, wine tasting sheets, handouts, and color guide. An expert panel will conduct the event on Zoom. You can pick up your wine package at the Wine Seller in Monument, or have it hand-delivered Feb. 19. All proceeds will go to the Friends of El Paso County Nature Centers, a 501(c)3 organization that supports environmental education programs in El Paso County. Info & online registration: <https://communityservices.elpasoco.com/virtual-wine-tasting/>.
  - **Western Museum of Mining & Industry (WMMI) Exhibit Museum Member Launch Party: The Mining Heritage of Colorado Springs and Mining in America**, Thu., **Feb. 25**, 225 North Gate Blvd. The first exhibit, which runs through August, highlights the coal industry, the gold ore processing mills, and the railroads that serviced them. Mining in America features an interactive map of 27 mining sites in the U.S. that shows the importance of mining to the growth of America. Public grand opening is Mar. 1. Info: 719-488-0880, [www.wmmi.org](http://www.wmmi.org).
  - **Wildfire Risk Reduction Program Kickoff**, Sat., **Feb. 27**, 10-11:30 a.m. Learn how to make your neighborhood more resistant to wildfires in a local class from a local, national award-winning organization. This free program features online seminars on organizing and implementing your program and concludes with a demonstration project. Lessons follow Fire-wise techniques. On-site assistance will be provided to each Neighborhood Ambassador leading a neighborhood through its own mitigation program. For more information and Zoom link, call 719-339-7831 or email [epg@tlumc.org](mailto:epg@tlumc.org).
  - **Western Museum of Mining & Industry (WMMI) Spring Break STEM Camp**, Mon.-Fri., **Mar. 22-26**, 225 North Gate Blvd. Full or half day, ages 8-12. Hands-on activities, daily guest speakers, and more. RSVP & Info: 719-488-0880, [www.wmmi.org](http://www.wmmi.org).

Our community calendar carries listings on a

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.

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

Letters to Our Community

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

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

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

Look for our next issue  
Saturday, Mar. 6

Ad space reservations due: **Fri., Feb. 12**  
Finished ad artwork due: **Fri., Feb. 19**  
Letters to the editor due: **Fri., Feb. 19**  
Calendar items due: **Fri., Feb. 26**

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



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

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