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



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Issue #241 — Volume 21 Number 3 — Saturday, March 6, 2021

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WHERE TO FIND OFFICIAL COVID INFORMATION
<https://covid19.colorado.gov/>

Local Events

Many local events continue to be canceled, suspended, or are being conducted on-line or by conference call. See pages 28-31 for details.

The unpredictability of the COVID-19 situation presents scheduling challenges for area governance entities and other organizations. Because *OCN* is a monthly publication, readers should assume that event information published in this issue is subject to change and information should be confirmed a day or two before the event by calling the information number or checking the organization's website.

Dates are shown for events even though the event has been canceled or suspended. The date indicates when the event was planned to be held or when it would normally have been held.

See pages 28-31 for event locations and other details of these and many other local events.

- WMMI, open Mon., Wed., Fri., Sat., 9 a.m.-4 p.m.,
- Tri-Lakes Silver Alliance Thrift Store, open Mon.-Sat., 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Essentrics Fitness Program, Tuesdays at 12:30 p.m. & Thu. at 8 a.m.
- Chess Nuts, Tue., Mar. 9 and Mar. 23, 5-9 p.m.
- Foot Care Clinic, Wed., Mar. 10, Fri. Mar. 19, and Fri., Mar. 26
- Ben Lomond Gun Club, Tri-Lakes Chapter, Thu., Mar. 11, 7 p.m.
- County Hazardous Materials & Recycling Collection Facility, appointments required, phone 719-520-7878 or check the website to book online, Sat., Mar. 13, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
- Faithful Friends, Sat., Mar. 20, 3-4:30 p.m.
- Tri-Lakes Chamber Monthly Education Series: *Employee Retention*, Tue., Mar. 23, 11:30 a.m.
- WMMI Spring Break STEM Camp, Mon.-Fri., Mar. 22-26
- Friends of Fox Run Park, Zoom meeting, Thu., Mar. 25, 6-7:30 p.m.

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Palmer Ridge High holds Snowball “Dance”



On Saturday, Feb. 20, Palmer Ridge High School held its annual Snowball Dance in an unusual venue—Don Breese Stadium. In a year when the COVID-19 pandemic has canceled or altered many events, the Student Council facilitated Snowball Week that started on Feb. 16 with specially themed spirit days where students could wear ski gear, pajamas, and outfits in ski run colors by grade level. The week culminated in an outdoor event that was previously held in the school gymnasium. The “dance” was only for PRHS students from 7 to 8:30 p.m. and the dress code was informal to allow for bundling up. The field at Don Breese Stadium was divided and groups were separated into cohorts. Hot chocolate and games were available, and music blasted from stadium speakers. Students enjoyed the event in 37-degree weather with light snowfall. *Photo by Jackie Burhans*

Lewis-Palmer District 38 Board of Education, Feb. 22

Board discusses impact of COVID-19 and plans for reopening

By Harriet Halbig

The Board of Education of Lewis-Palmer District 38 devoted most of its Feb. 22 meeting to evaluating the impact of COVID-19 on student progress and options for reopening to in-person learning on the secondary level.

Discussion of reopening to in-person learning

Superintendent K.C. Somers called on members of the administration to present information on the impact of the pandemic on the education of the district's students. Grades K through 6 have been engaged in-person full time for all of this school year. This is possible because each class defines its own cohort and contact tracing in the event of positive testing for the virus is relatively straightforward.

On the secondary level, where students change classes frequently and teachers are exposed to many more students a day, tracing becomes much more involved and required quarantines can remove a large number of teachers and students from the classroom. Despite the fact that county health authorities now require a 10-day rather than a 14-day quarantine, at times the number of teachers unavailable threatens the ability of schools to function efficiently.

Chief Academic Officer Lori Benton reported on changes in grade distribution in 2019 versus 2020 to demonstrate the impact on student performance at the secondary level during the current hybrid schedule where students are in the classroom two days a week, doing synchronous learning two days a week (attending

class in real time online), and having Flex Fridays where those who need additional help can receive it.

Benton found that the failure rate in 2020 was not much higher than in 2019 with regard to subjects required for graduation. Grades for electives tended to suffer because electives often require more in-person interaction.

The district seeks to ensure that high school students complete the graduation requirements so that they may graduate on time. Flex Fridays are being used to provide any additional help needed to keep students on track.

When asked about testing, Benton said that the district administered a local PSAT test last August to determine the rate of retention of the previous year's teaching. She cautioned that this test is usually done in September or October after students have been back in the classroom. She said that 80 percent of students participated and that those who did not participate deprived the district of data to be used for planning.

National PSAT and ACT tests will be administered in April, but results will not be available until a month or so later. Advanced Placement (AP) tests will be in April and May, but results will not be available until summer, with families receiving the results first.

Referring to a recent survey of parents and students, the respondents by a large margin said that they would prefer a return to in-person learning, while at the same time expressing concern about increased quarantining due to county health requirements. Many said that the current hybrid system is work-

Monument Sanitation District, Feb. 17

District may refuse town's TENORM treatment wastewater

*By Allison Robenstein
and Lisa Hatfield*

At the Feb. 17 meeting, the Monument Sanitation District (MSD) board discussed creating a contract to stop the town of Monument from sending wastewater containing radium (TENORM) to the Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility (TLWWTF), of which MSD is one-third owner. The board also approved lease agreements for another year, heard engineering reports, and reviewed financial statements.

Note: Reporter Allison Robenstein was able to call in to the meeting, but phone audio quality continues to be incomprehensible. So she also dropped off a recorder to the meeting room to review it to hear what was said. Reporter Lisa Hatfield tried to access the meeting using the Google Meets information posted on the district website but was never admitted to the meeting.

Radium removal from Monument Well 3/9

Background: All Denver and Arapahoe water wells have some level of radionuclides. Naturally occurring radioactive material (NORM) that has been concentrated due to treatment is called technologically enhanced naturally occurring radioactive materials (TENORM). See page 40 of Monument Town Colorado | Documents-On-Demand (documents-on-demand.com).

D38 (Cont. on 2)

MSD (Cont. on 7)

D38 (Cont. from 1)

ing well.

Executive Director of Student Services Rick Frampton, who is also responsible for pandemic response,

reported that although data regarding COVID-19 has improved considerably since November, the incidence is still much higher than last spring. Nonetheless, the county has chosen to declare the county to be in the yellow phase of

the state dashboard (with purple being the most serious, followed by red and orange). At this point, return to in-person learning is recommended but not required.

He said 194 members of the staff have received their first COVID vaccination and 29 have received their second. The assumption is that once at least 80 percent of those who have contact with students have been vaccinated, staff will no longer have to be quarantined.

It is hoped that all staff who desire it will be vaccinated by the end of March.

On the day of the meeting, 340 staff and students were in quarantine. A great deal of time and effort is being spent on tracing contacts between individuals who test positive and those around them.

A primary concern with returning to full-time in-person learning is the difficulty of maintaining social distancing in secondary schools. One way to counteract this would be to create

several pods within each classroom so that each student is only near four or five others on a regular basis. Staggering periods and adding lunch periods could reduce the number of students in the hall at any given moment.

Synchronous learning will remain valuable in times of distance learning



Above: At the regular February board meeting on the 22nd, Dr. Lori Benton announced that Jessica McAllister (left), D38's Career and Technical Education (CTE) coordinator, was recently recognized as an emerging leader of the year by the Colorado Association for Career & Technical Administrators (CACTA). CACTA is the administration division within the Colorado Association for Career and Technical Education (CACTE), the state professional association. Benton, who is chief academic officer for D38, said McAllister was nominated by her peers across Colorado and was the unanimous choice for her attitude, positivity, and her willingness to dig in and learn. She was instrumental in leading the revision of the CTE programs, said Benton. McAllister helped the district completely revise its CTE programs this past year. McAllister said she is thankful for the opportunity to work for the district—she loves what she does and who she does it for. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

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during quarantine and Flex Fridays.

Board Treasurer Ron Schwarz suggested that the board concentrate on what it can control. He asked what the community could do to make the return less of a risk.

Frampton responded that the most important thing is not to come to school sick.

Asked about a target date for reopening, Somers said it is March 8 due to the logistical complications involved. He said that many nearby districts are aiming for some time in March and said that the advantage of March 8 is that it would allow two weeks of instruction followed by spring break, during which time any adjustments could be made.

Somers said that there is a great deal of emotional and psychological anxiety involved in such a major change.

Board President Chris Taylor said it would be less disruptive to continue as we are with the hybrid model and said that some students fear that the schools will shut down entirely again in the event of a large outbreak.

Board Secretary Tiffney Upchurch commented that some high school seniors would really like a return of normalcy before graduation, including a prom.

Leadership changes

Somers reported that three leadership positions are currently being filled. These are

the principal of Palmer Ridge High School, the principal of Lewis-Palmer Elementary School, and the district's chief financial officer. Advisory committees have been formed for the principal positions and interviews will begin soon. The current chief financial officer will continue to work until the end of the school year but will do so remotely.

Grace Best update

Somers also reported that the Steering Committee for the Grace Best Master Plan has been selected. All who applied were accepted to the committee and they have met twice. There will be a community discussion in April. Three tours of the facility have been

conducted, and a community survey will be sent out.

Energy audit update
The Schneider Electric energy



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Saturday ZOOM Meetings. New Time: 9:00am

- **Supporting the Needy in March 2021**
- Pennies for Patients for LLS at Bear Creek Elementary
- D38 High School Key Club Projects Ongoing
- **Granting Cycle Opens in April**
- Foundation Grants for Youth and Our Community
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audit is also ongoing. A 30 percent update was provided, including recommendations for LED lighting, HVAC upgrades, and security vestibules. There will be a 60 percent update on March 31 to include cost estimates.

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There have also been two sessions regarding equity as part of the Colorado Education Initiative. There will be five in all involving the leadership team. Once these are completed, the administration will determine how to apply them in the district.

The board recognized Jessica McAllister, D38 Career and Technical Education coordinator, for receiving an award as an emerging leader by the Colorado Association for Career and Technical Education Administrators.

The board approved a policy on the subject of

Lewis-Palmer District 38 District Accountability Advisory Committee, Feb. 9

Committee hears communication update, information about Lewis-Palmer Middle School

By Harriet Halbig

Principal Seann O'Connor showed a student-made video tour of Lewis-Palmer Middle School and spoke briefly about its programs at a virtual meeting of the

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Pure Romance

By Amy Yocom-Vos

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staff leave.

The Board of Education of Lewis-Palmer District 38 meets at 6 p.m. on the third Monday of each month at its education center, 146 Jefferson St. in Monument. Seating is extremely limited, but meetings are livestreamed on the district website, lewispalmer.org. The next meeting will be on March 15.

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

District Accountability Advisory Committee on Feb. 9.

The student population is 797, of whom 152 are fully online and 26 part-time online.

The school program stresses emotional safety through the use of such tools as the Path 2 Empathy program, the No Place for Hate program initiated by the Anti-Defamation League, and the presence of two counselors and a social worker on site.

To promote physical safety, students scan their identification card on arrival at the building. There is 3M film on the windows on the ground level around the entrance to minimize shattering of glass, and additional door alarms and cameras have been installed.

The school has a full-time gifted/talented facilitator and offers such electives as gateway to technology, robotics, performing arts, Spanish, physical education, and yoga. There are new math and language arts materials in use.

The school has shifted to a departmental model. In the past, a single teacher from each subject area would work together. Now, all teachers of the same subject are working together, giving them the opportunity to share best practices and offer mutual support. Planning time is also available for the groups.

The school's parent teacher organization has provided funding for technology supplies for distance learning over the past year.

Community partnerships include pen pals, the Kiwanis Harvest of Love food drive, a Veterans Day celebration, bell ringing for the Salvation Army, and a hero squad. There are plans to write letters to area seniors.

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Legislative update

Board of Education liaison Tiffney Upchurch reported that the state Joint Budget Committee has approved a preliminary budget, and the district seems to be doing well due to conservative planning. The district will prepare budget forecasts on a campus-by-campus basis.

There has been no news on administration of standardized tests. To receive federal funding, the state must receive a waiver to not administer them.

Chief Academic Officer Lori Benton said the district is preparing as though the tests will be administered in April.

Communication update

Public Information Officer Julie Stephen spoke about the goals of her department, which include promoting two-way communication with families and the

community, distribution of timely and accurate information, and keeping the district website updated and easy to use.

Digital Communication Specialist Rachael Wardwell was thanked for her crafting of the district face on social media outlets including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

The district will send out a new mailer in the next few weeks in the form of an oversized postcard. This will go to all residents of the district whether or not they are involved with the schools. It will detail information on such subjects as community partnerships, deferred maintenance, and progress on the Grace Best Master Plan.

Stephen said her department sends updates to families throughout the year and adds families to

the list as they exhibit interest in the district.

The department uses text or phone calls for important messages and stresses the importance of keeping email addresses and phone numbers up to date.

Every student now has an email address as well, so direct communication is eased.

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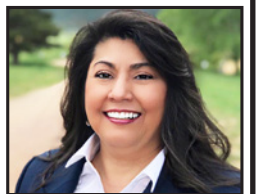
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The department now has two student interns.

Unified Improvement Plans

The committee divided into subgroups to review Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) documents for all schools.

These documents, required by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), detail various aspects of a school's strengths and weaknesses with regard to student performance.

Based on standardized test scores, various subgroups of the student population, including those with disabilities, those on a free/reduced lunch plan, and those in gifted/talented programs, are evaluated according to a state-determined scale varying from "exceeds expectations" through "nearing" to "does not meet expectations."

School administrators then explain steps to be taken to rectify weaknesses and how the efficacy of these actions could be measured. In some cases, this includes a change in curriculum or added time dur-

ing the week to address certain subject matter.

The UIPs presented at this meeting applied to the 2019-20 school year. Because Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) tests were not administered last spring during pandemic-caused closure, it was difficult to compare that year's achievement to that of the previous year.

Reviewing these documents is part of the charge of DAAC. These documents were in draft form.

The D38 District Accountability Advisory Committee meets five times a year. In the past, each meeting has been at a different location and included a tour of the campus. This year, due to the pandemic, all meetings have been held virtually. The next meeting, the final one of this academic year, will be on Tuesday, April 13 from 7 to 8:30. The meeting may be viewed on the district YouTube site.

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

Monument Academy School Board, Feb. 11

Board discusses High School options, updates board policies

By Jackie Burhans

The Monument Academy (MA) School Board held its regular board meeting on Feb. 11, where members discussed expanding High School options and updating board policies. Board member Chris Dole was absent.

High School options

MA Secondary School Principal Julie Seymour reported having discussions about onboarding high school freshmen to the Naviance system for college and career readiness to facilitate the required Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP). The ICAP guides students and families in exploring career, academic, and postsecondary opportunities. Seymour said freshmen should be able to access Naviance by the fourth quarter of the school year. Christianna Herrera, chief operating officer (COO), said that Naviance will help students identify and reach their goals whether that is college or not.

Seymour is also having meetings about offering dual enrollment (DE) through Pikes Peak Community College (PPCC) as well as concurrent enrollment (CE) taught in house. Teachers with a master's degree in a subject can become qualified to teach CE. These programs allow students to take college courses and get credit both at college and at high school. Seymour said that, in theory, high school students could have their associate's degree by the end of high school.

Herrera said MA will work with PPCC and Brigham Young University for additional choices. She noted that PPCC also has trade courses. Herrera said MA is hoping to join in with the existing D38 contract. MA pays for the DE and CE courses so long as the student passes with a C grade or higher. Textbooks and other fees are covered by the student's family. Transportation is not provided.

Board policies

The MA board considered and approved several board policies both before and after an executive session to discuss legal matters. The following policies were unanimously approved:

- 1500A—Board of Directors Governance—Added clause that the chief operating officer and the chief financial officer, along with two board

- members, will annually review and execute the contractual agreement with legal counsel for all organizations pertaining to MA.
- 1500B—Chief Operating Officer—Added statement about legal counsel as in 1500A.
- 1500C—Chief Financial Officer—New policy for a newly added position. Added statement about legal counsel as in 1500A.
- 1511—Admissions—Added definition of "open seat."
- 1512—Open Records Request—Updated hourly charge amount per law along with changes based on other district and state guidelines.
- 1513—Staff File Access—Changed wording from Executive Director to Chief Operating Officer plus other changes required by law.
- 1514A—MA Board Code of Conduct—Changed number from 1514 in anticipation of adding policy 1514B in the future, added annual board self-assessment, fixed reference to Colorado Revised Statutes.

MA board policies can be found at <http://bit.ly/ma-bd-policies>.

MA joins Education Alliance of Colorado

Board member Ryan Graham tabled an agenda item reporting on a new charter school group called the Education Alliance of Colorado (EAC). MA subsequently released an announcement that can be found on its website at <http://bit.ly/ma-eac>. EAC is currently working on an appeal to governing bodies to better formulate processes for school quarantines. See its website at <http://edallianceco.org>.

Highlights

The following items were highlighted at the board meeting:

- Elementary School Principal Charlie Richardson said MA got help from Davonne Johnson, Learning Services director for D38, on how to certify teachers for the K-3 Reading to Ensure Academic Development (READ) act.
- Richardson met with the chief engineer on the Highway 105 plans that include changing the ingress and egress of MA. It is a massive project that is at least a year away and it's complicated to use federal funding for charter school improvement.
- The west campus School Accountability Advisory Committee (SAAC) met to hear the recently completed Uniform Improvement Plan (UIP) but needs more time to digest the information before reporting to the board.
- The east campus SAAC completed its UIP in February and reported it to the District Accountability Advisory Committee (DAAC). The SAAC


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Christina Cotton

also reported on a mid-year parent survey that saw an increased response rate. Overall satisfaction and feeling heard received high ratings.

- The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) for the west campus asked for teacher requests for reimbursements and grants. They also reported on activities, events, and the pavilion project. PTO for the east campus reported on teacher appreciation, thank you posters,

and improvements to the staff lounge.

- Assistant Principal and Assessment Coordinator Mary Venticinque is preparing for spring assessments, which will include the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) tests and, most likely, the Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) tests.
- MA is using its full wheelhouse of marketing tools to attract kindergarten students, retain cur-

rent fifth-graders through middle school, retain eighth-graders through high school, and attract new students at all grades. At this early juncture, MA has 1,024 students in K-10 for the 2021-22 school year.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, March 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.

MSD (Cont. from 1)

Since early 2016 when it received the notice of violation for exceeding the radium MCL (Maximum Contaminant Level) at the discharge point of the Well 3/9 Water Treatment Plant, the town has considered several treatment options including dilution (blending), an ion exchange system, HMO System (Hydrolyzed Manganese Oxidation), and adsorptive resin. See www.ocn.me/v16n11.htm#mbot1017.

In 2017, the town made Well 9 treatment modifications that allowed sufficient dilution to occur to satisfy the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) on the radium issue. Public Works Director Tom Tharnish said then that the state preferred a blending option that required water from Well 3/9 to mix with water from another well with significantly less radium to dilute the radium. Blending did not require the disposal of hazardous byproducts. See www.ocn.me/v17n6.htm#mbot, www.ocn.me/v20n12.htm#mbot.

When the town began this process, it was noted that treatments to remove radium result in either a liquid or solid residual that requires special disposal methods.

The town's new proposed NORM removal process would create concentrated TENORM in specialized radium removal filters. If it backwashes these radium filters into the MSD sanitary sewer collection system, the TENORM filtrates would become part of the MSD influent to TLWWTF. Disposal of the resins must be done through the only Colorado-based facility, Clean Harbors, that is authorized to process radioactive material. See www.ocn.me/v18n4.htm#tlwtffuc.

Normally, all wastewater from the town's Public Works Department, including potable water filter backwash cleaning discharges from the water treatment plant, flows to MSD for treatment.

The CDPHE just approved the cleanup method. See related Feb. 16 Monument BOT article on page 16.

Chairman Dan Hamilton and Treasurer John Howe both suggested MSD could refuse the TENORM backwash wastewater altogether.

MSD Environmental Compliance Coordinator Jim Kendrick suggested GMS create a pre-treatment regulation regarding any radium backwash TENORM in conjunction with EPA Region 8 Pretreatment Coordinator Al Garcia. He went on to recommend the new regulation make clear MSD will prohibit any wastewater with TENORM from coming to its collection system—and the TLWWTF plant. Kendrick said if the town uses an ion exchange process, which is one of several EPA's best available technologies and Small System Compliance Technologies for removing radium, the resulting solid resin aggregate is expensive to dispose of.

Adding to the issue, the CDPHE is developing guidance for implementation of regulations on registration and licensing of TENORM and is in the process of receiving stakeholder input. It will deal with requirements and provisions for the generation, handling, processing, transfer, receipt, transportation, disposal, possession, distribution, and beneficial use of TENORM. The requirements become enforceable on July 14, 2022.

Hamilton said he would lead the contract preparations suggested by Kendrick.

ORC and engineering reports
Since MSD has no district manager now, Donala Water and Sanitation District is MSD's contracted Operator in Responsible Charge (ORC). Jeff Hodge, Donala general manager, said via memo that as his team familiarizes itself with the MSD systems, they fixed a circuit breaker for pump 2 at the Trails End Lift Station where they also pumped out the station and cleaned it. This led to checking connections for similar equipment.

Howe suggested the board review how invoices are split for the TLWWTF Joint Use Committee (JUC). The JUC is composed of three wastewater treatment districts—MSD, Palmer

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Lake Sanitation District, and Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District—that co-own the TLWWTF.

GMS Consulting Engineers Inc. provided a 13-page memo for its February report. It continues to provide resident project representation for the Willow Springs sanitary sewer installation. As in past months, GMS continues to respond to questions and provide information to property owners and developers in the MSD service area. Many of these items are in regard to proposed plans for new sewer

service line installation and onsite inspections. In the last month, they responded to 96 utility locate requests.

Financial reports

Howe briefly discussed the monthly financial reports. As they have in previous monthly statements, accountant Haynie and Co. provided the following comments: “Management has elected to omit substantially all of the disclosures required by accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. If the omitted disclosures

were included in the financial statements, they might influence the user’s conclusions about the District’s financial position, results of operations, and cash flows. Accordingly, the financial statements are not designed for those who are not informed about such matters.”

Howe noted the district’s total current assets have increased slightly from the previous month to \$901,120 up from \$894,370.

Hamilton made a note to switch out the Toshiba printer as the monthly costs surpass the district’s needs. Accounts Administrator Cheran Allsup said 1,100 bills are printed every month.

No change to rates expected

GMS facilitated a workshop on the evening of Feb. 2 to review

the draft “2021 Tap Fee Study and Evaluation.” At the March meeting, the board plans to accept the current rates without any changes expected.

Lease agreements extended another year

The board holds three lease agreements—for Second Street Hair Salon, Santa Fe Trail Jewelry, and Black Forest Foods—that were reviewed and approved for another year. Board Secretary Marylee Reisig owns the jewelry store. The leases total \$2,300 in monthly revenue for the district.

Executive session

The board went into executive session at 10:20 a.m., to C.R.S. §24-6-402(4)(b) and (e) to discuss personnel matters and receive legal advice. Upon returning to open session at 11:26 a.m., the board consensus was to have both video and

sound made available for remote attendees for the March 17 regular board meeting unless the state allows regular attendance by all in-person by that date. The meeting was adjourned at 11:32 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 March 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.

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



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By James Howald

The Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) board met on Feb. 8 to hear District Manager Jessie Shaffer report on a regional effort to plan for water re-use. Shaffer also gave a brief update on the status of the district’s capital improvement projects. Shaffer and Board President

Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, Feb. 8 Regional water re-use project planning underway

Brian Bush discussed residential developments coming to the district. Shaffer summed up efforts to dispose of office equipment and other materials. Finally, the board heard operational reports from Shaffer and Operations Supervisor Dan LaFontaine.

Regional water re-use

The Pikes Peak Regional Water Authority (PPRWA) is an organization of public water suppliers formed by its members to share information and work jointly to address issues related to water supply. Located in El Paso County, its geographic area extends from Palmer Lake across the northern areas of the county, through the areas east of Colorado Springs and then west through the Fountain Valley, forming a horseshoe surrounding Colorado Springs. The Town of Palmer Lake, Forest Lakes Metro District, Donala Water and Sanitation District, the City of

Fountain, Security Water and Sanitation District, Cherokee Metro District, the Town of Monument, WWSD, Triview Metro District and the county are all members of PPRWA.

Shaffer said the PPRWA was beginning a study on water re-use that would address the issue of how participating water districts might receive return flows of water. The discussion includes Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU), whose pipelines may provide a way to return water to the participating water districts, Shaffer said.

Shaffer told the board the proposed study will consider ways to move water from the river into the CSU system and then north to participating districts including WWSD, how the southern components of the project will be designed, and how much the project will cost. Shaffer said it was clear how to get return flows out of

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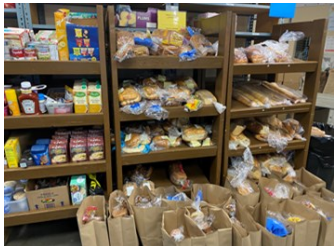
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the Highway 83 tank to WWSD but less certain how return flows would be transmitted into the CSU system, which includes the Highway 83 tank.

Shaffer said five to 10 of the PPRWA member districts might participate in the study.

WWSD already has funds in its budget to participate in the study, Shaffer said, adding that he expects to have more details for the board in March. PPRWA has a Project Participation Agreement in place that defines how the participating districts will work together. Study costs will be shared equally among the participants, Shaffer said.

Capital projects

The district has three capital improvement projects—upgrades to the South Water Treatment Plant (SWTP), upgrades to the Central Water Treatment Plant (CWTP), and a rebuild of the Lake Pump Station (LPS)—combined into one contract, Shaffer told the board. The SWTP has had work done to the floor, the pumps moved, the chlorine room rehabilitated, and a new chlorine generating unit delivered and connected. Work is going more slowly at the CWTP due to El Paso County’s process to replat the lot to include the land WWSD recently purchased from Lewis-Palmer School District 38. A meeting has been scheduled to hear the contractor’s Guaranteed Maximum Price for the work on the LPS, Shaffer said. The

LPS project will be critical in terms of timing and execution, he said, as the work will need to be coordinated with the cycle of filling and draining the lake.

Residential developments coming to the district

Shaffer and Bush summed up the status of several residential developments in the planning stages:

- A development planned by PT Cloverleaf LLC northeast of the intersection of Jackson Creek Parkway and Higby Road (often called the Walters property) will consist of 150 residences and is expected to have final construction plans completed by spring of 2021 and construction underway in 2022.
- A development planned by Classic Homes consisting of 390 single- and multi-family homes on 80 acres spanning Jackson Creek Parkway just north of the YMCA is expected to proceed over the next few years and will require between 200 and 300 acre-feet of water annually when complete.
- A development west of Jackson Creek Parkway adjacent to Jackson Creek Senior Living is expected to include a 250-unit apartment complex.

Disposal of used equipment and materials

Shaffer said the district planned to dispose of outdated computers, tablets, cell phones, and used drop pipe as scrap.

Highlights of operational reports

- LaFontaine reported the annual measurement for lost water was 7%.
- One district employee has contracted COVID-19 and has been recovering at home for two weeks.
- Woodmoor Ranch will prepare for summer operation in March.
- Chilcott Ditch will begin cleaning operations and may open as early as March.

Correction

In the article on WWSD published in the February issue of

OCN, this reporter stated incorrectly that the district had two customers for non-potable water. In fact, the district has two such customers connected to the southern non-potable pipeline and additional customers connected to the northern non-potable water line, including The Country Club at Woodmoor. OCN regrets the error.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 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 or call 488-2525 to verify meeting times and locations. *James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me.*



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Grace Best Master Plan



Lewis-Palmer School District 38 is developing a Facility Master Plan (FMP) for the Grace Best facility to identify and prioritize its current and future needs. The goal of this FMP is to create a plan to provide equitable access to a facility that addresses the needs of the students and community it serves and identify the necessary funding options and/or opportunities for implementation.

D38 hired an owner’s rep (Anser Advisory/Cooperative Strategies) in December 2020 through an RFP process to help with this project.

As a part of this effort, the district formed a Steering Committee. An invitation to participate was shared in January with all D38 families and our community. D38 was able to include all individuals who applied by the January 25 deadline on this committee.

The Steering Committee meetings began in February. The Steering Committee will host two Community Dialogue events (March 2 and April 14).

We want your input.

Please look for information about these Community Dialogue events in addition to updates on this project at www.lewispalmer.org/GraceBestPlan. You may also contact info@lewispalmer.org or (719) 785-4223 with any questions.

Donala Water and Sanitation District, Feb. 18

District bolsters cybersecurity defenses

By Jennifer Kaylor

The Donala Water and Sanitation District met to receive operations and management updates from staff and to hear about progress pertaining to potential water regionalization.

The February board meeting packet is available on the district's website by accessing https://www.donalawater.org/images/docs/packets/2021/February_2021_Board_Packet.pdf. A list of Donala's 2021 board meeting dates can be found at https://www.donalawater.org/images/docs/notices/2021_Meeting_Schedule.pdf

Florida cyberattack triggers district response

Water Superintendent Mark Parker reported about a Feb. 5 cyberattack against one of Florida's Pinellas County water treatment plants. Parker learned of the attack via Colorado's Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network, also known as CoWARN. The unknown attackers remotely accessed the supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system and unsuccessfully attempted to manipulate the amount of sodium hydroxide used as part of the

drinking water treatment process.

Parker informed directors that he had met recently with Timberline Engineering Inc., Donala's SCADA contractor, and developed a plan to identify and strengthen Donala's potential cyber weaknesses. Plans to change or implement remote capabilities, automatic on-site system shut-down hardware, and two-factor authentication were already in progress or scheduled for the near future. Parker estimated that Donala would have at least four if not more layers of security due to measures he initiated a few years ago plus the additional steps. President Ed Houle commended Parker for his foresight in advocating for stronger security.

With Donala functioning as the operator in responsible charge for Monument Sanitation District (MSD), Parker confirmed that MSD's older system was not vulnerable to cyber activity.

Engineer presents overview of developing ideas

GMS Inc. engineer Roger Sams provided a report that covered several topics of interest to the district. He discussed potential water regionalization options

being explored by the Pikes Peak Regional Water Authority regionalization subcommittee. See <https://www.ocn.me/v20n12.htm#dwsd> for additional information about potential regional cooperation.

The subcommittee proposed preliminary ideas for routing return flows to participating districts with the goal of including as many districts as possible. Variables such as incorporating existing infrastructure and current, in-progress water projects; constructing possible new infrastructure to establish necessary connections; measuring sufficient infrastructure capacity; and managing water quality from various types of water sources all add to the complexity of options considered. Funding and determining participating districts' shares of the project costs significantly complicate matters as well. Sams characterized potential regionalization as having circumstances that seemed to change by the hour. He confirmed that he would keep the board apprised of new developments and discuss the impact of those developments on the district's goals.

A smaller, four-person team chosen from the subcommittee, of which Donala's General Manager Jeff Hodge is a member, had been tasked with selecting the engineers for conducting a regional reuse study. Sams clarified the purpose of the study as determining how to collect water flows that districts are obligated to send downstream and recycle those flows as a water supply. He confirmed that a request for proposal (RFP) solicitation had been sent with a due date of Feb. 26 and anticipated that an engineer selection would likely be made by mid-March. The RFP included a final report deadline of Dec. 1. Vice President Wayne Vander-schuere expressed his perspective that the primary regional reuse challenges rest in legal and political aspects, and the mechanical side would be fairly straightforward.

Addressing the completely different topic of wastewater contaminant discharge regulations, Sams discussed the possibility of directing Triview Metropolitan District's waste products through Donala's residuals management facility, either temporarily or permanently. Donala uses the residuals management facility as a pretreatment step to dispose of its well water waste—such as arsenic, iron, and manganese—at a landfill and dramatically reduce its discharge of the naturally occurring contaminants through the Upper Monument Creek Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility (UMCRWWTF), which discharges into Monument Creek. See <https://www.ocn.me/v20n6.htm#dwsd> and <https://www.ocn.me/v20n7.htm#dwsd> for background information.

Although Donala manages the UMCRWWTF, the facility is partner-owned by Donala, Triview, and Forest Lakes Metropolitan District. Because Triview relies on well water to serve its customers and its residential and commercial customer base has the potential to increase, Sams anticipated a subsequent increase in contaminants flowing into the UMCRWWTF from Triview's well water treatment process. If it would become necessary for Triview to pretreat its wastewater flows at Donala's residual management facility, Sams counseled the board that it would need to gain clarity on management, responsibility, and liability issues in addition to pricing.

Additional updates

- Hodge informed directors of two individuals who reached out through legal representation to express interest in leasing water from Donala. As of the board meeting, Hodge did not know the individuals' identities but confirmed that Donala had the physical and legal capacity to fulfill the requests. Directors consented to Hodge's plan to proceed on the leases. The district also received an inquiry about leasing space in one of its water tanks. Hodge provided a price quote but had not received a response.
- Houle commented that the U.S. Air Force Academy may have revived its interest in a short-term wastewater treatment arrangement with Donala. Houle committed to keeping staff and directors apprised of any new information.
- The district was transitioning to new accounting software. Hodge informed directors that the software would create financial reports with a different format, reor-



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ganizing of some line items, and a switch to an accrual system as opposed to a cash system.

- Hodge announced that all of the remaining meters required for the district's changeout program had been purchased. A subcontractor had been hired to complete the installations. Hodge expected the process to be complete within 60 days. Houle commented that the functionality of the new meters' Eye on Water application provided numerous options for monitoring and managing water consump-

tion.

- At 11.215 million gallons, the district's January 2021 water demand was lower than its December 2020 demand, and it was also slightly less than January 2020 figures. The district's wells supplied 63.84% of the water consumed, and the remaining 36.16% came from Donala's Pueblo Board of Water Works lease.
- Parker provided a National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center forecast that estimated a likelihood of below-average

precipitation and higher-than-average temperatures across most of Colorado for the next three months. In his written report, Parker confirmed that snowpack was 96% of normal in the Arkansas River Basin and 80% statewide. At 2:57 p.m. directors moved to executive session per C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4) (h), personnel matters. OCN later confirmed that the board did not make reportable decisions following the executive session.

The next board meeting is scheduled

for March 18 at 1:30. Generally, board meetings are held the third Thursday of the month and are likely to be conducted online due to coronavirus restrictions; call (719)488-3603 or access www.donalawater.org to receive up-to-date meeting information. The district office is located at 15850 Holbein Drive, Colorado Springs. See <https://www.donalawater.org> for more information about the district.

Jennifer Kaylor may be reached at jenniferkaylor@ocn.me.

Triview Metropolitan District, Feb. 18

District strives to create robust water system

By Jennifer Kaylor

Directors for the Triview Metropolitan District conducted a brief but productive meeting on Feb. 18. Water attorney Chris Cummins presented a purchase and sale agreement for additional water shares and proportional storage. Staff apprised directors of progress on operations and projects.

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.

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 Feb. 18 agenda and board meeting packet may be accessed via https://triviewmetro.com/assets/documents/board/agenda/2021/Agenda_2021-02-18_final.pdf and https://triviewmetro.com/assets/documents/board/agenda/2021/BoardPacket_2021-02-18.pdf, respectively.

Purchase and sale agreement secures 1,000 shares

Cummins described the purchase of 1,000 Class A shares of water storage rights in the Stonewall Springs Reservoir Co. as an option that was made available when the Arkansas Groundwater Users Association (AGUA) did not acquire the shares. The purchase and sale agreement documented that Triview, in a previous purchase of 850 shares, agreed orally that it would "step into AGUA's shoes" if the transaction between AGUA and the Stonewall Springs Reservoir Co. did not proceed. See <https://www.ocn.me/v21n1.htm#tvmd>. Cummins added that the per-share purchase price was about 30% lower than Triview's previous purchase.

McGrady expressed enthusiasm, stating that the additional shares brought the total Stonewall Springs water storage to about 2,000 acre-feet and that it would be available within the next few months. This purchase, combined with Triview's 1,000 acre-feet of storage at the Pueblo Reservoir and another 1,000 acre-feet at Big Johnson Reservoir, would cap the total storage at about 4,000 acre-feet. McGrady estimated a two-year water supply if Triview's total storage filled to capacity and described the maneuver as "one of the best conjunctive use projects" that he'd ever seen. "This truly does set Triview up for long-term success," he added.

Directors unanimously voted to appropriate \$3.5 million for the 1,000 shares.

Earlier in the meeting, McGrady presented water consumption statis-

tics that substantiated the district's recent water and storage acquisitions. Triview currently serves 1,881 single-family homes and at least 65 commercial customers. Water consumption for 2020—972 acre-feet—exceeded 2019 numbers by about 180 acre-feet. The hot summer plus early and extended irrigation needs drove up water demand even more.

Pet waste issues raising a stink
Parks and Open Space Superintendent Matt Rayno reported on feedback from residents about the failure of some pet owners to use the district's pet porter stations. Despite strategic positioning of 41 stations throughout the district, some residents resist extending courtesy to the community by disposing of their pet's waste. Rayno planned to bump the number of stations to 50 or slightly more and place reminder signs throughout the district. He confirmed that the stations are checked or emptied twice per week, which includes resupplying pet waste bags.

Other topics in Rayno's report included current care and preparation of the area's open space. He described the current winter watering regimen as a successful means to protect Triview's trees from damage. The Public Works staff plans to complete perennial and shrub cutbacks and begin mulching landscape beds and "green season" activities in March.

Water Superintendent Shawn Sexton piggy-backed on Rayno's update. Reporting on equipment upgrades, he

described the conversion of a fire pump from fixed speed to variable speed in Sanctuary Pointe's C-plant that should be complete by April. The modification would improve versatility of the plant's pumping capacity, said Sexton.

Projects march on

McGrady reported about ongoing projects that included:

- Wells A9 and D9 in Sanctuary Pointe were fully operational as of the board meeting. McGrady confirmed that water production

from these wells came at a critical time for supporting future demand. Some minor final details remained on the restroom facility, but completion was expected by mid-March.

- McGrady confirmed that two chapters of the environmental assessment (EA) associated with the district's excess capacity agreement with Pueblo Reservoir had been completed. Triview's written portion of the EA must be submitted by April. Next steps include



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the Bureau of Reclamation's review of Triview's written submissions and then solicitation of agency comments. A regional representative will review the EA as well. Triview will have the month of May to respond to comments. McGrady expressed confidence that the July 15 contract completion remained realistic.

- Unusually cold temperatures temporarily disabled construction on the inlet and spillway at the Stonewall Springs Reservoir Complex, causing a minor delay. Assembly of a plunge pool and the pipeline continued to progress.
- McGrady reported that a final walk-through for the Northern Delivery System was planned for the final week of February. This pipeline project is intended to be a piece of the delivery system of Triview's renewable water sources, such as its water rights and storage from the Stonewall Springs Reservoir Co., to district customers.
- The foundation for the A-yard building, located along Jackson Creek Parkway (JCP), had been poured. With building permits having been obtained, plumbing installation would likely begin next.
- Requests for proposals for the 2021 overlay project, milling and replacing asphalt on Leather Chaps from Bear Creek Elementary School to its intersection with JCP, were in circulation. The bid opening date is planned for March

9.

- In response to a director's question, McGrady confirmed that the project to replace water meters throughout the district had slowed slightly, but he anticipated exchanging about 600 more meters in 2021.
- The district's new website was expected to go live by mid-March.

At 6:10 p.m., the board entered executive session §24-6-402(4) (b)(e) and (f) acquisitions, 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; negotiations regarding acquisition of renewable water resources, and personnel matters including the district manager's salary. 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 March 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.

Forest View Acres Water District, Feb. 24

State of district and potential inclusion discussed

By Lisa Hatfield

On Feb. 24, the board of Forest View Acres Water District (FVAWD) increased its inclusion fee and discussed the current state of the water district. A scheduled item about a possible inclusion of 53 acres was removed from the agenda at the request of the developer, but residents asked many questions about the decision-making process so far and how information was being shared.

The board approved a resolution to increase inclusion fees from \$3,000 to \$5,000 per acre, effective March 1. Residents asked questions about whether this timing would affect the plans for inclusion of Red Rock Acres, and the answer was that the board would

discuss it in executive session.

JZ's Land Development Company LLC has petitioned FVAWD to include land south of Highway 105, between Red Rock Ranch Drive and Rockbrook Road, into the district. A summary of the Petition for Inclusion on the district's website notes that, besides the inclusion fee, the district would receive a \$30,000 tap fee for each home that is built in the development. If the development is zoned for 38 lots as currently proposed, the district will receive a total of \$1.14 million in tap fee revenue.

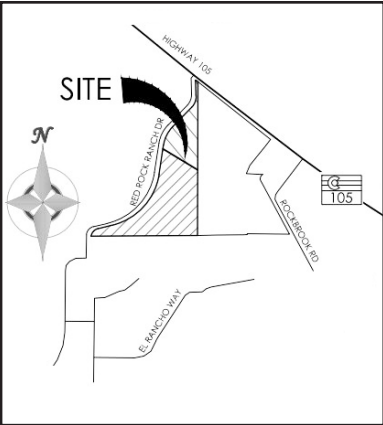
JZ's is petitioning the El Paso Board of County Commissioners to change the zoning of 5.37 acres from RR-5 to RR-0.5 (five-acre lots to half-acre lots), and 15.51 acres to be rezoned from RR-5 to RR-2.5 (five-acre lots to 2.5-acre lots), so it can build a proposed 38 homes there. See <https://epcdevplanreview.com/Public/ProjectDetails/167954> Red Rock Acres Rezone.

About 10 district residents attended the meeting to ask questions of the board on how to get their many specific questions answered about their infrastructure and budget. "We need numbers so we can understand," said Dave Pheteplace. He, Elizabeth Lonnquist, Rosalia McKean, Kelsey Belsher, and others were upset that they couldn't get answers to their multiple questions from the board about the capital plan or the proposed inclusion, in writing or otherwise.

Marty Brodzik said the district was in a very vulnerable position with or without the inclusion.

The board said it would add the 10-year plans to the website, but they were just drafts. Pheteplace volunteered to assist the board with long-range capital improvement planning, and Belsher volunteered to fill a board slot if a board member needed a break.

District Engineer John McGinn of JDS-Hydro explained, as he has at past meetings, that FVAWD is already faced



Above: JZ's Land Development Company LLC has petitioned Forest View Acres Water District to include Red Rock Acres, south of Highway 105, between Red Rock Ranch Drive and Rockbrook Road, into the water district. Map courtesy of El Paso County Planning.

with millions of dollars in non-negotiable infrastructure improvements related to regulatory issues, and it needs to add a second well for reliability.

"You are behind the eight-ball today. Adding 20 to 38 more homes won't matter (to the system)," but the inclusion fees paid by the developer would add seed money for projects that have to be completed whether or not the inclusion happens. "The district does not have the money in the bank," he said. Water rights would accompany the inclusion if it occurs.

District Manager Bob Blodgett told OCN that after the executive session, the board authorized District Counsel Peter Johnson to continue communications with the applicant regarding the inclusion petition. No vote or other action was taken.

The next meeting is scheduled for 6 p.m. March 24 at the Monument Sanitation District boardroom, 130 Second St., or on Zoom. District website: <https://forestviewacreswd.colorado.gov/>. District Manager Bob Blodgett: bblodgett@crscofcolorado.com.

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

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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.

To view a territory map with districts, visit 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 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

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Monument Board of Trustees, Feb. 1

Village at Jackson Creek development goes back to the Planning Commission

By Allison Robenstein
During the Monument Board of Trustees' regular meeting on Feb. 1, two water-related requests were approved. A land ordinance involving the Village at Jackson Creek was denied and sent back to the Planning Commission, which also had denied it.

Land use ordinances

The first of two land ordinances before the board was a review of the preliminary planned development site plan and rezone for the Village at Jackson Creek. During its Oct. 5 meeting, the BOT approved the service plan for the Jackson Creek Metropolitan District (JCMD) which includes the village. This district is divided into seven sub-districts. These are:

- District 1—Owner's tract.
- District 2—Monument Marketplace North, an 11.8-acre parcel approved in 2019. See <https://ocn.me/v19n8.htm#mbot>.
- Districts 3, 4, 5—The Village at Jackson Creek, mixed uses for residential and commercial.
- District 6—PCD-zoned parcel north of Jackson Creek Parkway.
- District 7—PCD/Planned Industrial Development (PID) zoned parcel.

The 47-acre village subdistrict is north of Walmart and sits between I-25 on the west and Jackson Creek Parkway to the east. The land is Regency Park PID, so the developer asked the zoning to be changed to Planned Development (PD). Intended to be a mixed-use development with shops and homes intermingled, the goal is the promotion of a work, live, play attitude. Grocery, retail shops, restaurants, offices, and hotels would be allowed in the newly zoned district.

It will be accessed by the future westward expansion of Harness and Cloverleaf Roads. The land is owned by Jackson Creek Land Co. being developed by Creekside Developers Inc.

According to the traffic impact study, this subdistrict alone would generate 11,270 vehicle trips on the average weekday, which may eventually warrant signals at Harness and Cloverleaf Roads where they intersect Jackson Creek Parkway. Trustee Jim Romanello asked if the board could force the hand of Triview Metropolitan District and cause a signal to go in sooner, but this question wasn't answered.

The Monument Planning Commission (MPC) board denied the request 5-1, citing the lack of adherence to Monument's Comprehensive Plan, the residential density as compared to the open space allotments, and aesthetics mentioned specifically as detriments. Building height was also an issue with

the commissioners, although the development is within the town's limitations. The PID zoning allows for 90-foot building heights.

The accompanying staff report contradicted many of the commissioners' complaints, noting the development met the requirements for the comprehensive plan, subdivision, and zoning ordinances.

Brett Behnke, representing Creekside Developers Inc., said three-story walk-up apartments, an amphitheater, and civic space will provide a look and feel of the mixed-use intentions. The developer was influenced by similar areas around Colorado, including Festival Park in Castle Rock, Salana and Copperleaf apartments. Behnke said they hope to entice small businesses, such as the small format grocery Tony's Meat Market in Castle Pines Village.

In response to the Planning Commission's issues, Behnke said:

- The PID zoning has been in place long before the Comprehensive Plan was created. Changing the zoning to allow for a mixed-use residential and commercial development rather than an industrial park will add to the small town feel of the town.
- The applicant is willing to decrease the residential density to no more than 20 dwelling units per acre.
- The developer is willing to make concessions for the building heights. Any building that is located less than 600 feet of I-25 could be a maximum height of 75 feet. Any building more than 600 feet from the highway could have a maximum height of 50 feet.

Planner Debbie Flynn said the BOT has four options: approve, approve with conditions, send it back to the PC, or deny with valid, legal reasons. Mayor Pro Tem Kelly Elliott asked why the MPC didn't approve with conditions but noted since there are many new planning commissioners perhaps they didn't know they were able to do so. Flynn said several commissioners told her after the fact they would have voted to approve if the building heights were lowered and the residential density was decreased.

Trustee Ron Stephens said, "I'm uncomfortable with circumventing the Planning Commission. I personally would like to send it back to the MPC for their approval, to make sure they are comfortable." He said he values MPC's input greatly and would not support the ordinance until it approves it.

Although Trustee Laurie Clark made a motion to approve the ordinance with the changes the developer

made public, there was no second. When Stephens motioned for the board to send the request back to the MPC, it was approved 6-1 with Clark voting against.

Mayor Don Wilson made it clear the BOT is happy to work with MPC with ordinance changes.

The next land decision was for Gleneagle Dental, a 3,186-square-foot, single-story office. It will be built on Lot 13 of the Monument Ridge commercial subdivision south of Fairfield Inn and Suites by Marriot which sits in Lot 11 and southwest of the future Monument Ridge Apartments in Lot 10. The dental office will be accessed using the full movement approach via Struthers Road or the right-in-only and three-quarter movement entrance via Baptist Road.

Dr. Michael Wonnacott DDS will move his current practice at 15455 Gleneagle Drive to this location. The MPC heard the request at its Jan. 13 meeting and approved it unanimously. See <https://www.ocn.me/v21n2.htm#mpc>.

No one from the public spoke nor did the board ask any questions. It was unanimously approved.

Water-related resolutions approved

Public Works Director Tom Tharnish presented two water-related requests to the board. Last summer, Well 3 required emergency repairs. The tank had severe corrosion and welded pipe seams were failing. A new replacement well will be drilled near the existing one. The \$1.28 million project was approved as one of many paid for with the \$22 million bond the town sold in 2020. See www.ocn.me/v20n10.htm#mbot.

Lytle Water Solutions LLC will perform design and engineering work at a cost of \$35,340. The existing well's power supply and discharge line will need to be relocated and connected to the new sections of pipe. The technical

specifications created through this process will be used to bid for well drilling contractors.

Trustee Ron Stephens asked Tharnish to explain more about the drilling process, asking, "What kind of design is involved in drilling a hole?" Tharnish said because of geology stratification, such as sandy soil, gravel, rocky areas, the engineers record then design for each type of soil.

Trustee Jamy Unruh and Clark voted with no without giving reasons.

The request passed 5-2.

The second project involves the water tank. Originally, Tharnish thought the existing 1-million-gallon tank could be fixed, but that doesn't seem to be the case. Instead, the town will build a replacement water tank at the same site or near the old one atop Monument Hill.

Because of land constraints, the old tank would need to be demolished and a new tank put in its place. However, recent developments show the town may be able to purchase a piece of land adjacent to the existing land and begin working on the new tank now.

Nine engineering firms received the request for proposal and three responded. Later this spring, Tharnish will ask the board to approve a contract for building a new tank and destroying the old one. This portion of the project will cost \$119,780.

Resident Mike Ferguson, whose family owns land near the current water tank, said he hopes the town will continue the existing friendly relationship with the family as the new tank gets installed.

Mayor Pro Tem Kelly Elliott said, "why anyone wouldn't approve these is beyond me." Trustee Laurie Clark did just that, but the request passed 6-1.

The board entered into executive session at 8:04 p.m. pursuant to C.R.S. 24-6-402(4)(e) regarding the purchase



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of property; for a personnel matter pursuant to C.R.S. 24-6-402(4)(f) regarding

the annual review of the town manager. Upon completion of the session, the

board came back to open meeting and promptly adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

Allison Robenstein can be reached at allisonrobenstein@ocn.me.

Monument Planning Commission, Feb. 10

The Flynn Project, UPS Distribution Center, Sanctuary Pointe Filing No. 9 all approved for recommendation

By Kate Pangelinan

Three items were considered during the Public Hearings and Recommendations part of the Feb. 10 Monument Planning Commission (PC) meeting: the Flynn Project—Use by Special Review, the UPS Distribution Center Filing No. 1 Final Plat, and the Sanctuary Pointe Filing No. 9 Final Plat. The PC voted unanimously to approve these proposals for recommendation to the Board of Trustees.

PC Chairman Chris Wilhelmi led the meeting, which was attended by Vice Chair Sean White along with Commissioners Steve King, Martin Trujillo, Joshua Thomas, and Daniel Ours.

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/UCdFlo8UcqZfFd-kio5jT6GDA. Citizens may find it easier to search for "Town of Monument" or "Monument Planning Commission" in YouTube's search bar.

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

The Flynn Project—Use by Special Review

Some facts about this development, referencing Planner Debbie Flynn's presentation, the meeting packet, and PC discussion:

- The Flynn Project is located at 309 N. Woodworth St. This property is close to Third Street, with Woodworth Street itself to the east. JJ Tracks and Air Academy Federal Credit Union are close by.
- The property is .355 acre.
- The area is currently zoned B, for General Business District, though a single-family residence is located on this property. The goals for this proposal include adding a 425-square-foot addition on the north side of the home—this will be a master's suite. There is also intent to turn the detached garage into a snack bar or ice cream shop, meant for use by people hiking the nearby trail.
- This shop is expected to provide outside seating, and customers will be able to walk up from the trail.

- The property owner is Bob Flynn. Matt Seiler of Seiler Construction attended the meeting representing the applicant, making himself available to answer questions.

During the designated Public Comment period, a citizen offered three items she believed the PC should consider as conditions:

- First, since Vista Montana Lane doesn't allow parking, there should be "No Parking" signs put up to prevent snack or ice cream shop patrons from blocking residents' garages. (Later, a condition was included in the PC's motion to approve this project asking that said signs be considered.)
- Secondly, that no drive-throughs be built on this property. (It was later stated that no drive-throughs could legally be built around the Flynn Project, so this is not something the town anticipates happening.)
- Finally, that the snack or ice cream shop should close by 9 p.m. This is because there is a distillery and bar across the street south of this property, and the citizen who spoke wouldn't want the bar to close for the night only to have all its customers move over to the snack shop, which would be feet away from her driveway.

There was a bit of PC discussion concerning this project, and the topics included a suggestion from White to put up bike racks by the shop for customers coming from the trail after riding their bikes, and a question from Wilhelmi about how the establishment might serve patrons requiring accessibility accommodations. White also asked what the advertising plan for this snack or ice cream shop would look like, after

which it was stated that the hope is to put a sign on the corner of the street.

In the end, a movement to approve the Flynn Project for recommendation to the BOT passed unanimously, 6-0, with conditions. These conditions included a request that the revised site plan be submitted for staff approval, and that "No Parking in the Alley" signs be considered.

UPS Distribution Center Filing No. 1 Final Plat

Some facts about this development, referencing Flynn's presentation, the meeting packet, and PC discussion:

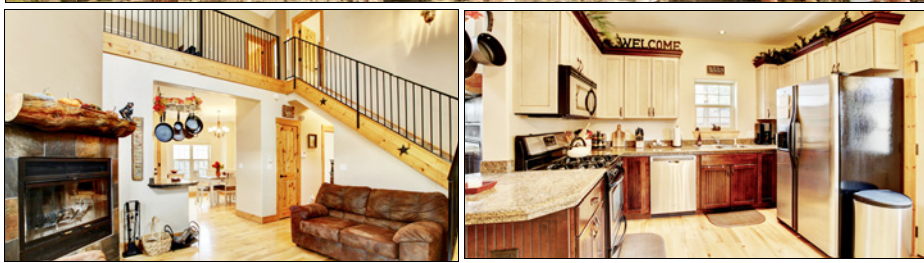
- The UPS Distribution Center is expected to be built on a 16.915-acre property as part of the Falcon Commerce Center. It will be located at 1671 Squadron Drive.
- The Filing No. 1 Plat pertains to a 736,800.7-square-foot "distribution and warehousing lot."
- The applicant is listed as "Ware Malcolm (Brian Weiss)" in the meeting packet, and the property owner is listed as "UPS (Sergio Enriquez)." Brian Weiss was present to answer questions.

Two citizens spoke during the designated Public Comment period, and concerns raised included the UPS Distribution Center's proposed landscaping. Weiss explained that the project's landscaping expectations are included as part of the site plan, which was already approved. A citizen also expressed concerns about how the popular trail along the property line might be impacted by this development.

A motion to approve recommendation of this proposal passed unanimously, 6-0, and the UPS Distribution Center Filing No. 1 Final Plat will now

MONUMENT PC (Cont. on 16)

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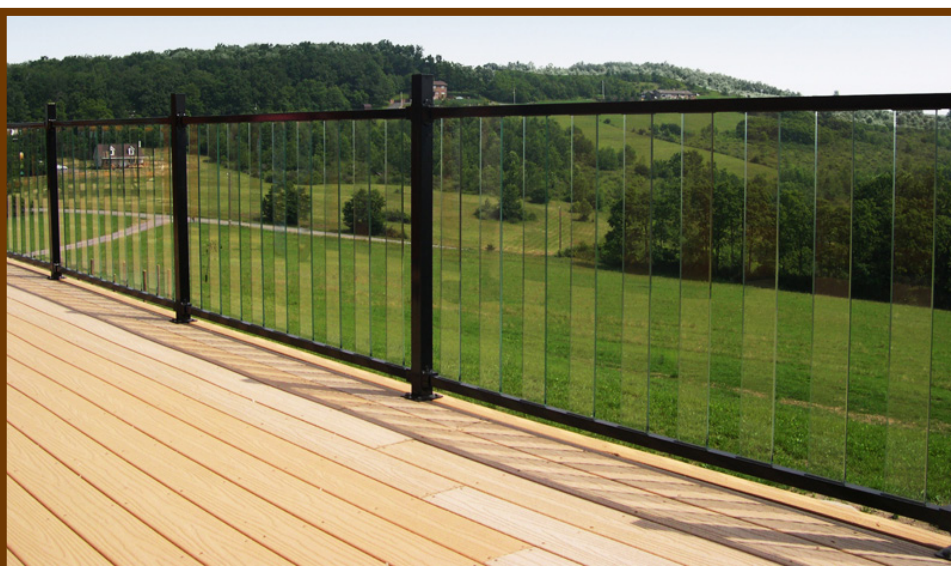
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MONUMENT PC (Cont. from 14)

go on to be considered by the BOT.

Sanctuary Pointe Filing No. 9 Final Plat

Some facts about this development, referencing Flynn's presentation, the meeting packet, and PC discussion:

- This property is 71.128 acres in size, containing 45 lots, six tracts, and three streets, listed as "Evening Sunset Place, Panoramic Drive, and Tree Woods Court" in the meeting packet. It is within Phase 3 of the Sanctuary Pointe development.
- The applicant is listed as "Classic Consulting Engineers and Surveyors, LLC" in the meeting packet, and the property owner is listed as "Baptist Road Investments."
- Loren Moreland from Baptist Road Investments was present to answer questions.

Three citizens spoke during the designated Public Comment period, two of whom expressed concerns including traffic speed and safety around this development, particularly involving Sanctuary Rim Drive. Questions were raised about the future of this access road, which it was stated can't easily handle two vehicles traveling in opposite directions. The third citizen wanted to know about how to access development plans online and was directed to the Classic Homes website.

Once brought to a vote, this proposal passed unanimously, 6-0, and the Sanctuary Pointe Filing

No. 9 Final Plat will also be considered by the BOT.

Village at Jackson Creek

The Village at Jackson Creek Preliminary PD Site Plan and Rezone has been sent back to the PC after appearing before the BOT and is expected to be considered again in coming months.

Non-Agenda Public Comment and other business

Some notable points:

- During the Non-Agenda Public Comment section, a citizen expressed concerns about the Monument area east of I-25 lacking a fire evacuation plan. This citizen also offered questions about road developments, safety, funding, and maintenance.
- Commissioner Ours said that since members of the public have raised issues about a road that's been approved by the town, Sanctuary Rim Drive, there should be a report made to the PC so the public can be informed. It was concluded that an explanatory presentation will be made once a list of relevant issues is provided to planning staff.
- Commissioner King made a statement regarding something he heard during a BOT meeting, in an attempt to make his perspective public and accessible. King was concerned that not everyone at the BOT meeting understood why a particular project was denied by the PC. He wanted to express that not all projects are necessarily "appropriate" to be built in Monument, and that

whatever is built then becomes the responsibility of the town. As such, King believes it is important to look at worst-case scenarios when not provided with concrete plans. A developer may want to build something/make a specific zoning change, but it may not be allowed, and projects are expected to conform to the town's Comprehensive Plan. King noted that "deny" is a viable option for the PC when reviewing projects.

- In regard to whether the BOT is provided with PC comments—including information about why a project might have been denied—it was explained that planning staff passes along memos to the BOT including all PC comments before each meeting.
- Planning Director Larry Manning provided a report describing ways the town has been working with developers.

For the time being, the public can 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 March 10.

Kate Pangelinan can be reached at katepangelinan@ocn.me.

Monument Board of Trustees, Feb. 16

Property purchase avoids new building costs



Above: The Town of Monument will purchase the property recently occupied by Code One for \$1.2 million. The space will be used for Public Works administrative tasks. *Photo by Allison Robenstein.*

By Allison Robenstein

During the Feb. 16 regular meeting, the Monument Board of Trustees approved the purchase of commercial property. The Native Sun annexation was approved for a March 1 hearing. A presentation on current water projects was heard, as was one on Kratom. Two officers were promoted to the rank of sergeant.

Boy Scout Troop 6 led the board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Purchase of real property of Lot 1 JJ Tracks Replat

Town Manager Mike Foreman said Norton R. Smith, the owner of in-town commercial property, has offered it for a purchase price of \$1.2 million. The 7,924-square-foot building is located at 259 Beacon Lite Road. Foreman said it would be perfect place for Public Works administrative work.

The building must be purchased by March 25, according to the contracts. Use of this building will preclude the need to build new office space. The purchase includes any furniture left behind by the previous occupant, Code One.

Town Attorney Andrew Richie asked the board to approve the use of 2A Water Fund money to buy the property. In 2005, Monument voters approved the use of the fund to purchase land and town buildings. However, in 2009 the BOT directed that all the money go toward new water projects. This ordinance would allow the purchase of this property as the voters initially intended.

Foreman said the 2A fund generates \$1.6 million annually. There is currently \$6 million in the fund that is unencumbered.

Trustee Ron Stephens asked that since the appraisal will be done at some point in the future, what would happen if the building were assessed at a significantly lower rate. Foreman said the contracted price is \$1.2 million irrespective of assessment.

The request passed 6-1. Trustee Laurie Clark voted against without asking questions nor giving a reason for her vote.

Native Sun annexation

The Native Sun Construction annexation is moving along. Planning Director Larry Manning told the board the resolution establishes that the property perimeter is contiguous with at least 1/6th of town property. The hearing for the annexation is set for March 1.

The property sits south of the Baptist Road/Forest Lakes Drive /Woodcarver Road roundabout, west of the proposed Falcon Commerce Center. There will be three phases of improvements, including:

- Phase 1: After annexation, Native Sun's construction yard will be relocated.
- Phase 2: Four or five years after the annexation is approved, a 10,000-square-foot, two-story office building will be built in the yard's place.
- Phase 3: Three or four residential lots may be built at the northwest portion of the site.

Traffic studies will show whether road improvements are necessary for the later phases of the project.

The request to initiate the annexation was approved at the Jan. 4 BOT meeting. During the Jan. 13 Planning Commission meeting, the board approved the annexation and zoning request for the 10.69-acre property.

No residents spoke for or against this resolution. It passed unanimously.

Public Works project updates

As a condition of the \$22 million bond offering, Foreman said staff has agreed to update the board bi-annually on water projects being paid for out of the funding. The board approved the bond offering at its Sept. 21 meeting. See www.ocn.me/v20n10.htm#mbot. Public Works Director Tom Tharnish gave a presentation to the board, updating the following projects:

- Radium removal is continuing for Well 3/9. During the April 6 meeting, the board unanimously approved the processes to remove ra-

dium for this well. See www.ocn.me/v20n5.htm#mbot0406. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) has approved the new radium treatment plans. The next part of the project will be to determine how radioactive material will be transported away from the town.

- The Raspberry Lane Street and Water Improvements Project involves replacing the water line, then the roadway and concrete curb. It is expected to be completed in October. See www.ocn.me/v21n2.htm#mbot0119.
- Two water tank projects are going simultaneously. The current tank that sits atop Monument Hill is deteriorating. A new tank was approved by the board on Aug. 3. Land near the current tank is being considered for the new storage. See www.ocn.me/v21n2.htm#mbot0119. See also the BOT article on page 13. Another new water tank is being designed and will be placed in Forest View Estates. The venture was originally started in 2017, but lawsuits delayed the project. Design should be completed by the end of this month. The overall project is scheduled for completion in May 2022. The board approved the design at its Jan. 19 meeting. See www.ocn.me/v21n2.htm#mbot0119.

Resident Nancy Swearigen said her concern with the current projects is that we are not facing the fact that Monument has no renewable water source. She said she doesn't see anything in those projects to pursue this. Mayor Don Wilson said renewable water projects are in the works, but there isn't anything to report just yet.

Police promotions

Police Officers Tim Johnson and Andrew Romano were promoted to sergeant by Chief Sean Hemingway, who said both men are capable, having years of military and police experience. The chief said he is proud to promote within the ranks, reviewing all internal candidates before looking outside the department.

Hemingway reminded the board that one year ago, when he first arrived, only one officer was working per shift with no backup, no supervision, and no way to respond to multiple serious calls at once.

With the addition of these two sergeants, every squad will now have a supervisor on duty, something the department has never seen until now.

Romano graduated from Pine Creek High School in 2007 and entered the Air Force Reserves in 2009. He was hired by the Monument Police Department in 2012. He was named YMCA Officer of the Year and Employee of the Month and has earned numerous other service awards. He will continue his work as a Field Training Officer.

Johnson is originally from Evansville, Ill. He served 18 years in the U.S. Navy and completed 4.5





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deployments. He received numerous commendations and awards while in the military. He worked in Fountain as a patrol sergeant, retiring after 12 years. He came to Monument in 2019.

Kratom

The board heard a presentation urging it to reconsider a Nov. 18, 2019 moratorium on the sale of Kratom in the town. See www.ocn.me/v19n12.htm#mbot.

According to C.M. “Mac” Haddow, a lobbyist for the American Kratom Association, Kratom is derived from a poppy plant in Southeast Asia related to the coffee family. There are between 11 million and 16 million Kratom users in the U.S. The drug is used most often as pain relief, a way to curb opioid use, or to manage withdrawal symptoms from opioids. According to Haddow, the typical American Kratom user is married or partnered, between 30 and 50 years old, and employed with an income between \$35,000 and \$75,000.

The Food and Drug Administration has discussed scheduling the drug but has not moved forward with any plans. Between 1999 and 2017, there were 15 known Kratom-related deaths in Colorado. Haddow said 14 of those were mislabeled and found to be caused by other drugs present in the body. Trustee Jim Romanello took this opportunity to joke about other mislabeled drug deaths, then explained he has used Kratom himself.

The National Institute of Drug Abuse found Kratom has no significant addiction liability.

Haddow suggested instead of a full ban on sales, the board instead impose an age limit for purchase,

noting the board is typically open to freedom of choice for its citizens.

Two people spoke about their own Kratom use. Scott Lee began using it after a longboard accident left him with severe pain. As a three-years-sober alcoholic, Lee tried many other types of non-medicinal pain management systems before finding Kratom. A 25-year resident of Monument said she also tried many pain-management therapies after a hysterectomy.

Stephens was still hesitant to allow Kratom sales because there is insufficient research. He said this “smacks of the smoking industry,” because people were initially told cigarettes were good for you, but as research came in it was the opposite.

Mayor Pro Tem Kelly Elliott reminded the board the last time Kratom was presented, it was to set up manufacturing in Monument. Haddow said a reputable manufacturer would be a great business for the town, noting Colorado is one of the largest Kratom consumer markets in the country. As a researcher who performs medical device and drug inquiry, Elliott said anecdotal information isn’t enough to change her mind.

Based on a Kratom consumer database Haddow mentioned, Trustee Mitch LaKind asked how many Monument residents are registered. Haddow said there were 48 people. “I would have no issue with it being sold in Monument if it is helping people,” LaKind said.

Mountain View Electric agreement intact

The town and Mountain View Electric Association (MVEA) have an agreement allowing the electric

company to use town infrastructure and rights-of-way. It has been in effect since 2006 but has come up for renegotiation. MVEA pays 3% of each customer’s bills to the town in return for infrastructure use.

Town Attorney Andrew Richie said this is a straightforward agreement.

Although there were no public comments during the hearing, after the vote was taken resident Ryan LeVier expressed concern the resolution limited town residents to only one choice for their electricity. Clark said she had numerous calls from residents raising concern about the lack of choices. Mayor Don Wilson made clear this resolution only allows MVEA to use town infrastructure. Wilson said, “We don’t choose our electrical providers for Monument. It is an open market. If there was somebody wanting to compete with Mountain View Electrical, they’d be happy to do that.”

The meeting adjourned 8:37 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 March 1. Call 719-884-8014 or see 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.minutesondemand.com> and click on Board of Trustees.

Allison Robenstein can be reached at allisonrobenstein@ocn.me.

Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, Feb. 4, 11, and 25

Board appoints new trustee; water debate continues



Above: Newly appointed Palmer Lake Trustee Darin Dawson is sworn in by Town Administrator Dawn Collins. Dawson replaces Bob Mutu, who resigned in February. Photo by James Howald.

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

The Palmer Lake Board of Trustees (PLBOT) met four times in February. They held a special meeting on Feb. 4. On Feb. 11, the first of two regular meetings was held. On Feb. 25, the board held both a workshop meeting and the second regular meeting.

After appointing a new trustee to the seat vacated by Bob Mutu’s retirement at the Feb. 4 special meeting, issues related to water—addressing storm water, clarifying the number of water taps available and deciding how to handle taps purchased but never used, updating the rules concerning well permits, and implementing water rate increases that were approved by the previous board—took center stage at the meetings.

The board also began a discussion on short-term rental policy, heard a report from the Palmer Lake Police Department on its new traffic enforcement program, approved two special event permits and granted a new business license.

Dawson appointed to board

Seven applicants for the vacant seat of the board attended the special meeting on Feb. 4: James Amato, Shana Ball, Darin Dawson, Kory DeAngelo, Kevin Dreher, Kelsey Hemp, and Cindy Graff Kuchinsky.

After an opening statement, each applicant answered questions from Mayor Bill Bass ranging from how they would handle an issue that the public opposes to their opinions on recreational cannabis and how they would interact with the town’s agencies. Trustees asked occasional follow-up questions.

When the questioning concluded, Trustee Karen Stuth moved to appoint Kuchinsky to the board but there was no second. Trustee Jessica Farr moved to

appoint Dawson and the motion was seconded by Trustee Sam Padgett. Bass, Trustee Nicole Currier, Farr and Padgett voted yes; Trustees Glant Havenar and Stuth voted no.

At the Feb. 11 meeting, the board voted unanimously to approve Resolution 14-2021 appointing Dawson to the board. Following the vote on the resolution, Dawson was sworn in by Town Administrator Dawn Collins.

Board approves storm water strategy

At the Feb. 11 meeting, John Chavez of Chavez Consulting Inc. LLC presented the Program Description Document (PDD) he prepared for the town, which details how the town will comply with Colorado’s regulations for handling storm water. The PDD provides the primary regulatory mechanism used by the state to evaluate the town’s compliance, Chavez said.

A year earlier, the previous board approved \$26,250 for Chavez to begin work on the document. At that time, Chavez told the board that the town had received a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit in 2018, but that the work to bring the town into compliance with state regulations required by the permit had never been done. He said that to comply, the town would need to have a PDD to document its storm water treatment strategy that covered:

- Public involvement.
- Public education and outreach.
- Illicit discharge detection and elimination.
- Oversight of new construction.
- Post-construction storm water management.
- Municipal operations pollution prevention.

In his initial presentation, Chavez also said if the town did not meet the state’s requirements, the state would step in and develop a plan for the town.

At the Feb. 11 meeting, Chavez explained the 2010 Census had classified Palmer Lake as part of the Colorado Springs urbanized area and that decision had obligated the town to get an MS4 permit. Chavez said that when he began working on Palmer Lake’s storm water strategy in 2020, the town was three years behind schedule in its compliance efforts.

Chavez said that in June of 2020 he worked with Palmer Lake’s attorney to update the town’s ordinances to provide the authority to implement and enforce storm water regulations. Chavez summarized the changes he made to the town’s code as follows:

- Title 8 of the town’s code was updated to define and prohibit illegal discharges, and the definition was aligned with the state’s statutes.
- Title 14 was updated to require work done in the town’s right of way to prevent and minimize storm water pollution.

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- Title 16 was updated to specify permanent storm water quality in subdivisions.
- Title 17 was exhaustively updated to provide construction criteria and align them with El Paso County's criteria.

Chavez said he drafted the PDD to meet the “bare bones requirements,” but to avoid over-committing the town.

The PDD addresses the town’s construction oversight program, post-construction and municipal operations, and record-keeping requirements for annual reporting, Chavez said. The PDD has eight chapters, one for each section of the MS4 permit, and 10 appendices that define the necessary processes. Operating procedures inspection forms, illicit discharge forms and reports are included in the PDD, Chavez said.

Chavez told the board the PDD has four pieces:

- The program requirements.
- The deadlines for compliance with the requirements.
- The necessary record-keeping for each requirement.
- What the town does for each requirement.

Chavez told the board he completed the PDD for less than half of the planned amount.

The PDD and a link to report a spill or dump are on the town’s webpage at this URL: <https://www.townofpalmerlake.com/pw/page/stormwater>.

Following Chavez’s presentation on the PDD, the board voted unanimously to approve Resolution 13-2021 to implement the MS4 PDD.

Board struggles to manage unused water taps

At the Feb. 11 meeting, the board took up the issue of water taps that had been purchased but remained unused because no connection to the town’s water distribution system had been made. Collins told the board that the current municipal code said any tap not used within 12 months of purchase was considered abandoned and asked the board for direction on how to handle these taps. She suggested notifying the owners of the unused taps and giving them a year to use the tap. She asked the board if it would authorize returning the tap fee to any owner who had not complied with the town’s code. Collins pointed out that the taps were the town’s property and had to be tied to a specific address.

Stuth said some taps had remained unused for two years and that was unfair to other people who wanted to build. She argued tap owners should be given a shorter time to make use of their tap.

Currier said everyone should comply with the current code and argued for taking unused taps back from their purchasers.

Town Attorney Mathew Krob said there was a possibility the town’s code might not have been published at the time the unused taps were purchased, and this complicated the issue. He said that going forward, the policy should be applied uniformly and all unused taps should be addressed in a single vote, adding that obtaining a land use permit was the trigger indicating a tap was in use. Krob also said the town’s position was that there should be no secondary market for taps and if taps were to be purchased back the compensation should be what was originally paid for the tap, not the current tap fee, which was raised in the last year.

Bass said he wanted to see the current ordinance enforced and favored giving owners of unused taps six months to comply. He said he favored buying back any unused taps and wanted to see consistent enforcement going forward.

John Cressman, who served as mayor before Bass’s election, told the board this issue affected him personally because he had purchased three taps in the expectation of developing property he had already subdivided but not platted in Red Rocks Ranch and two more he planned to use for a development on Greeley Boulevard. He had paid the monthly water use fees while he had owned the taps and he asked the board to consider returning both the fees he paid for the taps, which totaled \$20,000, and the monthly fees he had paid for water use, which totaled \$4,000. Cressman said he wanted to retain two of his taps to develop property on Greeley Boulevard.

Padgett said she opposed returning the monthly fees to Cressman since the town would have received those fees if they could have sold the taps to someone who used them.

Nikki McDonald, who served as mayor before Cressman, told the board she also owned unused taps, which she planned to use to develop the property on Greeley Boulevard in partnership with Cressman. She had not paid monthly fees for water service since

purchasing the taps but was willing to do so, she said.

Bass, Currier, Dawson, Farr, and Padgett voted in favor of a motion specifying two things: First, that an owner of an unused tap would have six months to pay outstanding payments and to submit a land use permit to retain the tap, and second, if an owner of an unused tap wished to relinquish the tap, they would be reimbursed for what they paid for the tap but not for monthly water base fees paid. Havenar voted no.

Policies on taps and well permits examined

At the Feb. 4 special meeting, the board voted unanimously to approve Resolution 12-2021, which allows for the sale of 10 water taps when administrative criteria are in place, thereby updating the town’s moratorium on granting new water taps.

Frisch said he believed, based on previous studies, that the town could have a maximum of 1,060 taps based on surface water rights, and he recommended in the short-term new taps could be approved up to that number, but that no new taps be approved until building plans are in hand and ready for construction. Frisch said he would have a more complete study of the issue finished in 30 days but at present he believed the town had 37 taps available.

Collins said there were eight projects that had either applications or applications and plans, so those taps were encumbered already.

Collins suggested allowing for new taps and reporting to the board at each meeting how many had been requested.

In response to a comment from Currier that the town is not required to provide water, Havenar said the town was obligated to provide either a tap or a well permit.

Mark Schuler, who served on the previous board, pointed out that, although studies had shown the town could support 1,060 taps on its surface water rights, for each of the last 10 years the town had to augment available surface water with water from its wells.

Local developer Kurt Ehrhardt asked if some of the available taps could be reserved for commercial development.

A motion to table the discussion of taps for 60 days failed with only Currier voting in favor.

Dave Frisch of GMS Inc. Consulting Engineers gave the board a summary of the town’s wells at the Feb. 11 meeting. The town has about 155 wells, some in the Dawson Aquifer and some in the Denver Aquifer. Sixty of those have a requirement to be metered and reported to the town annually and 10 metered and reported to the town upon request. An additional 15 wells are required to be metered and reported to the state, he said. None of the required reporting was being done, Frisch said.

Frisch advised the board to define the process for private residential wells as follows:

- All residential wells will be limited to the Dawson Aquifer; all other aquifers will be reserved for town use.
- Town staff with legal council should prepare a standard application that would require building plans to be included.
- The fee for a well permit should be \$20,000, the same as for a water tap, but \$15,000 should be waived because the town does not develop or process the water.
- Each well should be authorized to produce a maximum of one acre-foot per year, limited to 15 gallons per minute and should be metered. Existing wells should have meters installed by the end of 2021. There should be an additional charge for use over one acre-foot, and the charge should be enforced through a lien on the property.
- Water draw should be related to lot size.

Frisch confirmed that the town was obligated to provide a well permit if residents were unable to connect to the distribution system.

Following the discussion at the Feb. 11 meeting, the board voted on two motions and one resolution:

- The board voted to direct staff to amend the town’s code for well permits based on Frisch’s recommendations.
- The board voted to direct Frisch to proceed with his proposed study.
- The board voted on Resolution 16-2021 to approve a well permit for a property on Meadow Lane at the current fee.

The discussion of well permits ended at the Feb. 25 meeting with a discussion and vote on Ordinance 2-2021, which amends the town code based on Frisch’s recommendations. The ordinance codifies the recommendations made by Frisch at the previous meeting, including the aquifer to be drilled, the fees established, the limit of water use, the installation of a meter, and annual reporting. The ordinance specifies the well permit fee will be set in the Master Fee Schedule. Collins said a goal of the ordinance was to align the processes for taps and for wells.

Stuth moved twice to table the ordinance until further study could be done, but the motions did not pass.

Collins clarified that the ordinance did not establish a fee for a well permit and that the fee would be set in the upcoming Master Fee Schedule. Krob confirmed that the ordinance aligned the process for well permits with the process for water taps and did not set a fee for well permits.

The board voted to approve the ordinance with only Stuth voting no.

Long-delayed water rate increases coming in March




At the Feb. 25 meeting, Collins asked the board for direction regarding a 3% annual increase in all water rates—tap fees, monthly base rate, and monthly



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PALMER LAKE (Cont. from 18)

water use rate—that the previous board had passed in 2019 but that had been implemented only for one of those three rates. Those increases are required to service loan payments that will increase in 2024 and to fund future water needs. Collins emphasized that loan payments are being made but asked the board how it wanted to proceed with the increase in rates, specifically does the board want to implement the 3% increase for water taps, use, and base rates the previous board approved after hearing from a water rate consultant in 2019. See <https://www.ocn.me/v19n4.htm#pltc>.

Dawson asked Collins to project the 3% annual increases over 40 years to determine when funds will begin to accumulate.

Bass moved to increase the rates as specified in the existing resolutions. The motion passed with only Stuth voting no.

Collin said the increases would appear in customer bills in April.

Policy for short-term rentals in early stages

At the workshop meeting on Feb. 25, Krob gave the board an overview of short-term rental (STR) policy in other communities. STR policies usually address the number of days and nights that qualify as “short term,” where STR are allowed, and whether the number of STRs is capped. Other issues are how to tax and inspect them. Permits and sales taxes are usually required, he said.

Havenar said she believed there were currently 30 STRs in Palmer Lake and that a bed tax should be required.

Dawson and Stuth said how to handle parking should be covered in the STR policy.

Collins said she would research how other communities handle STRs.

The workshop meeting was adjourned with no specific actions taken.

Traffic enforcement program focuses on Highway 105

At the Feb. 25 meeting, Sgt. Adam Lundy of the Palmer Lake Policy Department (PLPD) told the board the department had seen an alarming uptick in traffic accidents since 2017, with crashes increasing from 35 in 2017 to 68 in 2019—a 94% increase. Lundy said the Selective Traffic Enforcement Program, or STEP, had been used across the Front Range and had reduced traffic accidents in six months to a year, encouraging the PLPD to implement it to reduce the number of traffic accidents.

Lundy said the Gap project to improve I-25 was rerouting traffic to Highway 105.

The STEP program will be self-funding, Lundy said, and will put one officer out on Highway 105 once a week to write tickets and enforce traffic laws. Data will be analyzed at the end of the year to track changes. Lundy asked the community to identify problem areas where enforcement would be helpful.

Special event permits approved

The board approved two special event licenses in February: the first for the Palmer Lake Wine Festival and the second for 24 Hours of Palmer Lake, an endurance race.

Matthew Hexter told the board about his plans for a wine festival to be held on Sept. 11, 2021 at the

northwest corner of the Palmer Lake Recreation Area. Hexter said he and Paul Murphy held a successful festival in 2019 but skipped 2020 due to COVID-19 concerns. He told the board he hoped to have 2,000 attendees at the festival.

Bass said he thought the 2019 festival was “really well done.”

Darin Lewandowski requested a special event permit for a running event to be held at Palmer Lake Recreational Area on two consecutive weekends, the first from April 9 to April 11, 2021 and the second from April 16 to April 18, 2021. Runners will try to complete as many laps around Palmer Lake as they can within a 24-hour period, Lewandowski said, adding he expects around 95 runners total, who will be divided into two cohorts divided between the two weekends.

The board voted to approve both special event requests.

Business license granted

The board approved a business license for Master Bilt Homes at 755 Highway 105. Only Padgett voted no.

The Board of Trustees is scheduled to hold three meetings in March, a regular meeting on March 11 and a workshop and regular meeting on March 25. The workshop will be held at 5 p.m. and the regular meetings at 6 p.m. All meetings will be 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.

Donald Wescott Fire Protection District meeting, Feb. 16

Meeting with firefighters’ union approved

By Allison Robenstein

The Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWF-PD) met Feb. 16 to approve a meet-and-confer agreement and to explain the plans for the search for a new fire chief.

Chief Vinny Burns and Director Charlie Fleece were absent.

The board approved meeting minutes from Dec. 1, Jan. 19, and the executive session Jan. 25 .

Meet-and-confer process set in motion

Chairman Mark Gunderman said recently Wescott fire fighters have formed their own union.

Michelle Ferguson, the district’s attorney, said the meet-and-confer resolution is not a recognition of the union, but it outlines a process required by statute to set up meetings between the chief staff, employees, and the union, and when board members can be present.

The Colorado Firefighters Safety Act, part of Senate Bill 13-205, “grants professional firefighters the ability to collectively bargain upon approval by the voters of a political subdivision.” There was previously no such agreement about the rules. The board is obligated to meet and confer at the request of the firefighters or their organization. This process does not require voter approval. The act reads, “Under this process, the parties are to discuss policies and other matters related to employment, including safety and equipment, but not compensation.”

Ferguson said the union or employees put in motion the process by which to set up a meeting. A board member or two may be present at the meeting, which hasn’t been scheduled yet.

The resolution was unanimously approved.

Chief search discussion

Gunderman said the board was going to hold a special meeting Feb. 18 to discuss moving forward with replacing Chief Vinny Burns, who is retiring this year.

- Initially, Gunderman said the board made a decision to look externally for an interim fire chief, because that gives the district flexibility. He said the board wants executive leadership to stay where they are for now and lead the projects they are leading.
- Ferguson and Gunderman clarified the board has not made an official motion to hire an interim chief.
- The board cannot make a decision in executive session, but they can vote when in public session at a special meeting once back in public session.

Exhaust system, committees, and protective armor

Battalion Chief Shannon Balvanz said the station exhaust system installers are “two feet away from completing the project.” All three stations will have the systems installed. Last month, he told the board Station 3 would need an electrical panel to handle the new system at a cost of \$8,500. The board didn’t agree to it. See www.ocn.me/v21n2.htm#dwfspd. The installers realized the existing panel would work after all. The installation should be done by Feb. 19. Then every truck exhaust pipe will be retrofitted to use the system which hooks to the tailpipe, keeping exhaust out of the station.

There was board consensus for approval of Gunderman’s idea to establish committees on compensation and strategic plan/capital improvements in 2021.

Early in 2020, the district received a \$5,000 donation from a resident to be used for personal protective armor. See www.ocn.me/v20n3.htm#dwfspd. Lt. Curt Leonhardt said all the ballistic equipment has been delivered except the helmets. Because fire personnel are going into active shooter scenes much earlier now, they need this protection. The idea is to get in quickly and haul people out to stop the bleed.

Public comments on safety

Resident and former DWFPD board member Dennis Feltz said he received an anonymous letter that makes serious accusations against senior leadership of the district, which various members of the community received and which he forwarded to the whole board. He asked that the board investigate the allegations to ensure the safety of the community and the firefighters themselves.

Ferguson said there were no allegations that either district operations or citizen services were being impacted. “We are not at liberty to speak about personnel matters,” she said, noting the board has taken the remedial actions necessary to address the complaints they received and that the letter included inaccurate information, according to the board’s investigation.

Gunderman said anonymous letters often include half-truths, refusing to make it a discussion item. Director Joyce Hartung agreed, saying they should not react to anonymous letters. She invited the writer to come forward and address the board directly.

Resident Mary Gunderman said she loves the new website because it provides a lot of good information.

The meeting adjourned at 4:59 p.m.

The next Donald Wescott fire district meeting is scheduled for March 16 at 4:00 p.m. If the meeting is held in person it will be at Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Dr. For a virtual meeting, the phone number is 669-900-9128, and the meeting code is 980 378 2073. Meetings are usually on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. For information, call Executive Administrator Stacey Popovich at 719-488-8680 or see www.wescottfire.org.

Allison Robenstein can be reached at allisonrobenstein@ocn.me.

Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District, Feb. 17

In-person attendance only—despite storm and COVID-19

By Natalie Barszcz

The Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD) board met in person at Station 1 on Feb. 17 to discuss the proposed agenda that is available on the BFFRPD website. Due to a heavy regional snowstorm, OCN was unable to attend in person and record the public meeting.

OCN made a request for a recording or remote joining instructions before the board meeting, but BFFRPD was unable to meet the request since no conference call was arranged, and BFFRPD could not

provide a recording of the public meeting.

Note: On this date, the COVID-19 Status of El Paso County Public Health Department was Level Yellow “Concern,” which recommends “minimize in-person meetings when possible and provide remote alternatives.” The January BFFRPD meeting, when the county was at Level Orange, was also in-person only. For more information visit: www.elpasocountyhealth.org.

For updates, current financial information, board agendas, and meeting minutes, district residents

should refer to: www.bffire.org.

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 is scheduled for March 17 at 7 p.m. For updates, visit www.bffire.org.

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

Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, Feb. 24

Officer Lucas honored; Station 1 remodel to begin May 2



Above: From left are Fire Chief Andy Kovacs, Monument Police Officer Rachael Lucas, MPD Chief Sean Hemingway and board President John Hildebrandt. Kovacs presented Lucas with a letter of commendation and the “Chief’s Coin” for the care and compassion she demonstrated on Jan. 28. Although off-duty at the time, she responded to a call involving a juvenile court-order protection and successfully de-escalated a tense situation that resulted in a favorable outcome. *Photo by Jennifer Martin.*

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) board meeting held at Station 1 on Feb. 24, the majority of staff and members of the public attended via Zoom conference call in accordance with COVID-19 state guidelines. Fire Chief Andy Kovacs awarded a letter of commendation and the “chiefs coin” to a police officer, and the board reviewed the final plans for the Station 1 remodel and reviewed the 2020 budget.

Secretary Mike Smaldino was excused.

Lucas receives letter of commendation

Kovacs recognized Police Officer Rachael Lucas of the Monument Police Department (MPD) for her actions during a medical emergency on Jan. 28. TLMFPD was assisting MPD with a situation that could have had an unfavorable outcome had Lucas not responded to the scene to de-escalate the situation, said Kovacs. Lucas assisted the fire crews, and her actions and professionalism went above and beyond what was required. It was a fantastic example of TLMFPD’s values of excellence, integrity, loyalty, respect, and service, said Kovacs.

Monument Police Chief Sean Hemingway said he has never seen a police department and a fire department with such a good working relationship that was well-established before he and Kovacs arrived. He thanked TLMFPD for its continued support and for recognizing Lucas.

Station 1 remodel starting

Division Chief of Logistics Dean Wahl presented the current D2C Architects Inc. plan for the Station 1 remodel and said the following:

- The district has not made any significant upgrades to Station 1 since it was built in 1998.
- Personnel are running on treadmills and inhaling diesel exhaust fumes under the current constrained layout.
- Station 1 can now be upgraded to match the growth of the community, a concept that was limited until the 2020 purchase of 15 acres east of the station, and the annexation into the Town of Monument that followed.
- The building upgrades will now expand over the previous property line to the east of the station, and the remaining acreage will be developed into a Regional Training Center.
- The project base bid is \$1.7 mil-

lion and within the approved budget. Mark Young Construction is scheduled to begin the remodel on May 2, with a projected completion by Oct. 15.

Wahl requested the board consider four maintenance items and upgrades to be completed during the remodel phase for an additional total of \$48,456, leaving any concrete and asphalt installations until 2022 during the Training Center development.

The board approved the additional costs, 6-0.

Wahl thanked the board and said, “the crews will appreciate the upgrades.”

Note: TLMFPD has been discussing remodeling Station 1 since January 2018, but the plans have been delayed multiple times. See www.ocn.me/v18n2.htm#tlmfpd and www.ocn.me/v19n7.htm#tlmfpd.

Regional Training Center—Station 1

Kovacs said a Training Center Development Working Group composed of Lt. Micah Coyle, Engineer Adam Wakefield, and Firefighter Golden Rains will represent all three shifts with the three battalion chiefs, and Wahl and Battalion Chief of Training Jonathan Bradley will lead the group. Training facilities such as South Metro Denver, Aurora Fire Rescue, City of Denver Fire Department, North Metro Denver, Boulder Fire Rescue and Poudre Fire Authority will be evaluated in the process, observing COVID-19 restrictions.

Moving forward, the group will develop short- and long-range plans for the remaining 14 acres at Station 1, with a phased-in approach to create the Regional Training Center. The board will be given a monthly progress report.

Note: This is a different regional training center from the one that opened in 2020 at Station 1, Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District.

2020 budget review

Kovacs said that in 2020 the district spent 90.5% of the total budget and \$882,019 was carried over to the starting balance for the 2021 budget. The excess resulted from the following budgeted funds:

- \$150,000 from the Capital Improvement Fund for the purchase of a Type 6 fire engine that was deferred until 2021.
- A \$200,000 savings from shift overtime that represented 73.8% of the allocated budget in 2020.
- \$300,000 was saved in Building Capital Outlay of the budgeted \$1 million.

- Several other small line items did not reach the proposed budget and contributed to the remaining balance.

Financial update

Treasurer Jason Buckingham read the financial report as of Jan. 31 and said the following:

- The first and largest installment of property taxes is expected in March, and the change in finances will be drastic. The projected Property Tax revenue is \$9.2 million for 2021.
- Specific Ownership Taxes were higher than expected at \$79,925, representing 8.9% of the estimated annual projected revenue of \$900,000.
- Ambulance Fees were lower than normal at \$47,409, representing 5.8% of the budget with projected annual revenue of \$825,000.
- Impact Fees collected were \$5,439, representing 4.4% of the budget with a projected revenue of \$125,000.

Of note was \$141,000 received for the 2020 Wildland Deployments. The district has budgeted \$50,000 for deployments in 2021.

Expenses were \$718,535 for January and about 7.9% of the projected 2021 expense budget of \$9.1 million. Wages, the largest expense, totaled \$499,269, representing 8.7% of the budget with a projected annual expense of \$5.7 million.

The seven bank account balances will now be reflected on every monthly financial report to make the board aware of the funds accumulating for the various projects.

Eleven payments above \$2,500 were reviewed and all appeared appropriate and within budget. A few of the larger payments were:

- \$15,073 for the Station 1 remodel.
- \$16,648 for the annual radio fee.
- \$28,154 for ESO Solutions, record management software.

Bradley said the new ESO Solutions Record Management System will consolidate software systems to include incident reporting, medical reporting, and inspection services.

The board accepted the financial report as presented, 6-0.

Mutual aid

Kovacs thanked the Colorado Springs Fire Department (CSFD) for providing back-fill crew at Fire Station 3 when units were dispatched to a residential fire alarm that was upgraded in transit to a structure fire. The fire was quickly extinguished with minimal smoke damage. Units from Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD), Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD), Palmer Lake Fire Department (PLFD), and Falcon Fire Protection District (FFPD) assisted at the scene in the northeastern area of the district.

Live fire incident investigation
President John Hildebrandt asked for

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an update on a live fire incident investigation. Kovacs said the following:

- A live fire training exercise with BFFRPD had resulted in a “near miss” during the training.
- Thankfully, no one was hurt but some equipment was damaged during the incident.
- Safety practices are now being independently evaluated to make sure it does not happen again.
- Interviews are being conducted, and the district is working with BFFRPD.
- The report will be concluded at the end of February.

Note: Live fire training is a critical part of the instruction and certification process for firefighters and involves a live fire in a controlled setting.

Chief’s report

Kovacs said the 100-day plan continues and he also noted the following:

- A monthly fire chiefs’ meeting has been established and could include: PLFD, Wescott, Larkspur Fire Protection District, BFFRPD, CSFD, and FFPD.
- Monthly command staff-level meetings with the Monument Police Department have been requested.
- An internal succession planning survey resulted in 100% participation and action items and the results will be shared with the board in March.
- The district is translating the 2019 Emergency Services International Master Plan and will implement a five-year plan in 2022. An internal survey will be conducted followed by a local community survey of business owners and residents.

Petition for inclusion

Kovacs said the district received a request for property inclusion from the homeowners at 756 Forest View

Way, Monument. He recommended the board assign the hearing date on the petition for inclusion at the March board meeting.

Future meeting location

For the months May through October, the location of TLMFPD board meetings will change to the Chamber of Commerce Building located at 166 Second St. in downtown Monument due to the Station 1 renovation project.

The meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday of each month. The next regular meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. March 24 at TLMFPD Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. Staff and the public are encouraged to attend the meeting via Zoom to comply with social distancing. Zoom meeting: 886-8850-7523 Password: 187219. For upcoming agendas and minutes, visit www.tlmfire.org/board or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

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

Royal named Colorado Springs fire chief

By Marlene Brown

Randy Royal, a 1975 Lewis-Palmer High School graduate, has been named Colorado Springs fire chief. Chief Royal has served in the Colorado Springs Fire Department for over 34 years. After a nationwide search and consideration of 37 candidates, the mayor’s selection panel named Royal the new chief. Royal was president of the 1975 class and was considered to be destined for leadership and great public service. His leadership role during the Waldo Canyon and Black Forest Fires deemed him highly qualified and experienced for this position. He was involved with Young Life in high school and continues to work with Young Life youths. Chief Royal will oversee 22 fire stations and over 500 service personnel. “I am honored to have been chosen by the mayor to fill the position of the fire chief for CSFD and proud to call Colorado Springs my home for over 40 years,” said Royal.

Marlene Brown can be contacted at marlenebrown@ocn.me.



El Paso Board of County Commissioners, Feb. 9 and 16

County Master Plan nears completion; progress at three Tri-lakes area developments

By Helen Walklett

During February, the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) received an update on the new county Master Plan. The commissioners also made decisions relating to three developments in the Tri-lakes area.

New county master plan

Speaking at the Feb. 9 BOCC meeting, Craig Dossey, executive director, Planning and Community Development, told the commissioners that work to create the new county Master Plan was almost complete. Describing it as having been a very in-depth process

with a very involved advisory committee, he stated it will have taken 2 1/2 years to complete. Dossey said, “We’re really looking forward to being done with it and starting to use it.”

The draft plan will be released for public review and comment in March and will be accompanied by a video setting out why the plan is important and why people should be interested in it. Both will be available on the county’s website at <https://elpaso-hlplanning.hub.arcgis.com/>

Following revisions in April, Dossey hopes to bring the draft plan to the county Planning Commis-

sion for adoption in May or early June.

County adopts streets at two developments

The commissioners approved the adoption of streets at the Forest Lakes and Gleneagle Golf Course developments into the county’s road maintenance system at their Feb. 9 meeting. They also approved the preliminary release of checks for \$178,759 for subdivision improvements at the Settlers Ranch Filing 2C. This followed the completion and satisfactory inspection of all the required improvements.

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

Woodmoor Improvement Association, Feb. 24

Board hears certified election results, reviews finances

By Jackie Burhans

The Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) met on Feb. 24 to hear certified election results and get an update on finances. Board members Connie Brown and Bert Jean were absent.

Election results

President Brian Bush reported that he had received and certified election results on Jan. 28, the day after the previous meeting. Although there were write-in candidates, the community re-elected Bert Jean, Peter Bille, and Ed Miller to their board positions.

Finance

Bush reported that it looks like the WIA is getting revenue from new construction and it has received 36% of its budget. Revenues are expected to be down from Barn and office rental fees. He congratulated staff for holding down expenses.

All but 164 people have paid their annual dues for

2021. Bush said the WIA board appreciates the vast majority of people who pay their dues on time and would appreciate it if everyone would so the board would not have to place liens or send bills to collections.

Board highlights

- Vice President Bille noted that new computers have been ordered and are being set up. Homeowners Association (HOA) administrator Denise Cagliari confirmed that old computers would be wiped and recycled.
- In January, 26 projects were submitted and all were approved. The board unanimously confirmed three new members to the Architectural Control Committee.
- The Barn window and entrance roof replacement projects are completed; both projects came in within the approved budget.

- The mitigation grant focused on Woodmoor Drive is going well with 16 lots in process and an initial reimbursement package submitted for \$6,000.
- There were 13 confirmed homeowners association (HOA) violations in January and two unfounded complaints. There were 20 HOA checks.

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 March 24.

The WIA calendar can be found at www.woodmoor.org/wia-calendar/. WIA board meeting minutes can be found at www.woodmoor.org/meeting-minutes/ once approved and posted.

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

February Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

Winter finally arrived in full force during February, producing our first above-normal monthly snowfall since September. Temperatures were well below normal, with daily and some monthly record lows set when the Arctic air settled in during middle of the month.

The first three days of the month started with temperatures well above normal, as highs reached the low and mid-50s each afternoon from the 1st through the 3rd. However, this quiet start to the month was quickly interrupted by a fast-moving storm. After a mild day on the 3rd, skies became cloudy by that evening and the temperature fell, with snow developing around

mid-evening. Snow, heavy at times, along with gusty winds created blowing snow and hazardous driving conditions through early the next morning. Within about six hours, 4-8 inches of new snow had fallen. The fresh snow kept temperatures below normal the next day, with highs just touching the freezing mark.

Conditions were relatively quiet the next few

days, with temperatures right around normal—in the 30s and 40s. However, a major pattern change was taking shape to our north, as very cold air directly from the Polar region was building and moving south. This cold air mass began to affect the region during the afternoon and evening of the 7th. However, for the first few days, the cold air was fairly shallow, only reaching to about 6,000 feet in elevation.

This developed a relatively unusual situation for us on top of the Palmer Divide, where the cold air could not reach up to us, but instead kept the lower elevations locked in the cold. This is known as a temperature inversion and occurs when cold air is below warm.

This pattern held for several days, with the depth of the cold air increasing slightly each night, then retreating back to the lower elevations during the day. A good example of this was on the 8th, when the cold air briefly moved into the Palmer Divide, quickly dropping temperatures into the single digits, with low clouds and flurries from around 2 a.m. to 6 a.m. Then, as the depth of the cold air lessened, warmer westerly winds kicked in and our temperatures jumped into the 40s in only a few hours.

At the same time, where the cold air hung on, temperatures remained in the single digits and teens with low clouds and flurries. This pattern repeated itself each day from the 8th through the 11th, with most areas below 6,000 feet never warming above the 20s while we reached the mid-30s to mid-40s each afternoon.

Finally, a reinforcing surge of cold air moved in from the north by the early evening of the 11th. This allowed the cold air mass to deepen enough to overcome the mild westerly flow and surge into the region. The initial signs were low clouds and flurries by mid-afternoon, then the cold air continued to deepen temperature tumbles, reaching the low single digits by midnight and low temperature falling below zero the next morning. The low clouds and light snow kept things cold on the 12th as well, with highs only reaching the single digits. Light snow continued off and on

in the cold air mass, and again the temperature tumbled below zero by the morning of the 13th and struggled to recover much that afternoon, barely reaching into the single digits again.

The final and strongest surge of cold air then moved in on the afternoon of the 13th. This was accompanied by more light snow and some winds and even colder temperatures. As the dry, cold air moved in, skies cleared out. This combined with the fresh snow to allow temperature to plummet to record levels. Those looking for heat on Valentine’s Day had to produce their own, as Mother Nature decided to keep us in the deep freeze. The high temperature on the 14th didn’t even make it above zero, and when the sun set the evening temperature quickly plummeted to the teens and 20s below zero. When we woke up on the 23rd, everything was in the deep freeze, with most locations at minus 20 or lower.

Fortunately, the Arctic air mass slowly began to slide off to the east over the next few days, allowing highs to return to the 20s on the 15th and 30’s on the 16th. But quickly behind the departing air mass, another storm was moving through the region. This was another quick but powerful storm, dropping 4-8 inches of new snow from the late afternoon of the 17th through the early morning of the 18th. Skies cleared out behind this storm, but the quiet weather only lasted about a day, as another quick-moving storm brought 1-3 inches of new snow from the evening of the 20th to the morning of the 21st.

Westerly winds returned over the next couple of days, which allowed temperatures to jump back into the mid- and upper 50s on the 22nd and 23rd. The westerly winds were also efficient “snow-melters” (the classic Chinook winds) through much of the recent snowfall. Then, one final storm moved through the region with an initial frontal passage during the evening hours of the 23rd. This held temperature below freezing on the 24th, with snow falling most of the day and continuing into the morning hours of the 25th. Another 4-8 inches accumulated for most of us, bringing our monthly totals to above normal levels.

Quiet but cool weather held tight for the last few days of the month. But even though temperatures remained below normal to end the month, the stronger sunshine helped to melt some of the snow. Of course, we will continue to see daylight grow longer as we head into March, but that also means the weather pattern begins to get more active. In fact, the second week of March through the second week of April is usually our snowiest time of the season. When the snow does fall, it usually melts pretty quickly, providing the much-needed moisture to start the growing season.

A look ahead

March is known for a wide range of weather conditions in the region. We can see 70° temperatures one afternoon and blizzard conditions the next. Many of us remember the blizzard of March 2003 when we received 30-50 inches of snowfall that shut down the region. However, snow that does fall begins to melt quickly this time of the year, providing beneficial moisture for our plants as we head into spring.

February 2021 Weather Statistics

Average High	35.2° (-4.5°)
100-year return frequency value max	51.9° min 32.8°
Average Low	9.9° (-3.1°)
100-year return frequency value max	21.9° min 3.7°
Highest Temperature	59° on the 23rd
Lowest Temperature	-23° on the 15th
Monthly Precipitation	1.15” (+0.21” 22% above normal)
100-year return frequency value max	2.10” min 0.02”
Monthly Snowfall	20.5” (+2.8”, 15% above normal)
Season to Date Snow	57.5” (-11.0”, 16% below normal)
Season to Date Precip.	2.81” (-2.27”, 45% below normal)
Heating Degree Days	1232 (+194)
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.

Cleared town employees deserve public apology

In May 2018 Trustees Clark, Coopman, and Bornstein and private citizen Ann Howe began their public, unrelenting attack on town attorney Alicia Corley, Treasurer and acting Town Manager Pam Smith and Town

Clerk Laura Hogan, accusing them of general incompetence and specifically, financial malfeasance.

On Jan. 19, 2021, Mayor Wilson stated (as recorded in the meeting minutes) he received an email from the U.S. Department of Justice that the investigation pertaining to the finances of the Town of Monument is closed and no evidence was discovered that indicated any federal crime had been committed.

I want to hear a public, relenting apology from at least these four since all their innuendo, unabashed accusations, and not-so-veiled attacks yielded only to besmirch the reputations and lives of these innocent people.

Surely, it is not too much to ask of potential candidates for public office (governor?) to admit a mistake publicly when they were so public about their “opinions” (that’s all they were, upheld by not one scintilla of fact). Isn’t that what they would expect someone else to do had their reputation been sullied and livelihood threatened? Let’s hear it folks. You weren’t shy about making false claims, let’s see if you have the intestinal fortitude to admit your errors, truly the mark of an enlightened, honest, and fair human.

Laura Kronick

■

Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

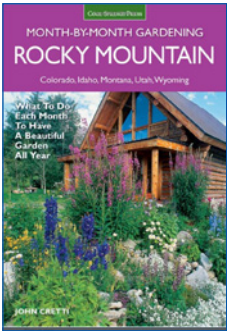
Planning and preparing your garden

By the staff at Covered Treasures
“If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need.”—Marcus Tullius Cicero

With spring arriving, it’s time to go from dreaming to doing. It is possible to have beautiful and productive flower and vegetable gardens in Colorado, you just need the right guidance. These books are helpful resources.

Rocky Mountain Month-By-Month Gardening: What to Do Each Month to Have a Beautiful Garden All Year
By John Cretti (Cool Springs Press) \$26.99

Take the guesswork out of gardening. Included are detailed instructions on watering and fertilizing to pruning and problem solving. Complete with specific advice on growing annuals, perennials, bulbs, grasses, roses, ground covers, trees, shrubs, and vines, you will reap the benefits of the gardening successes of John Cretti, who has more than 32 years of gardening experience. Discover the when and how of growing, caring for, and maintaining your Rocky Mountain garden.



The Wildlife-Friendly Vegetable Gardener: How to Grow Food in Harmony with Nature
By Tammi Hartung (Storey Publishing) \$16.95
Tammi Hartung and her husband have more than 40

years of experience on their organic farm in Colorado, plus she is a frequent teacher and lecturer. This specific guide helps you create harmony between the vegetable garden and the wildlife who consider it part of their habitat. It explains how to start with a healthy garden, how to create beneficial relationships through thoughtful planting, how to attract beneficial insects and pollinators, and how to purposefully create habitats for wildlife with strategies to help garden and wildlife peacefully coexist.

Homegrown Herbs: A Complete Guide to Growing, Using, and Enjoying More Than 100 Herbs
By Tammi Hartung (Storey Publishing) \$19.95

Enjoy a thriving, fragrant herb garden and use your harvest to bring beauty, flavor, and health to your everyday life. Tammi Hartung provides in-depth profiles of 101 popular herbs, including information on seed selection, planting, maintenance, harvesting, and drying. Hartung also shows you how to use your herbs in a variety of foods, home remedies, body care products, and crafts.

The Backyard Homestead: Produce all the food you need on just a quarter acre
Edited by Carleen Madigan (Storey Publishing) \$18.95
Put your backyard to work. Enjoy fresher, organic, better-tasting food. Grow vegetables and fruits; keep bees, raise chickens, goats, or even a cow. And when the harvest is in, cook, preserve, cure, brew, or pickle the fruits of your labor. This comprehensive guide to homesteading provides a wealth of information with easy-to-follow instructions.

Mountain States Medicinal Plants: Identify, Harvest, and Use 100 Wild Herbs for Health and Wellness
By Briana Wiles (Timber Press) \$27.95

Whether you are just starting out or are looking to deepen your herbal knowledge, this book is your companion for finding, identifying, harvesting, and safely using 120 of the region’s most powerful medicinal wild plants. Plant profiles include color photographs, identification tips, medicinal uses, herbal preparations, and harvesting suggestions. Lists of what to forage for each season are useful year-round.

Mini Meadows: Grow a Little Patch of Colorful Flowers Anywhere Around Your Yard
By Mike Lizotte (Storey Publishing) \$16.95

With as little as 50 square feet and for less than \$20, gardeners can plant a colorful meadow that demands little in the way of space, mowing, or maintenance, uses less water, and provides a habitat for pollinators. From choosing the right variety of seeds, preparing the soil, sowing, and watering, gardeners of all levels will be able to reap the rewards of thriving meadows through the seasons, year after year.

Firescaping: Protecting Your Home with a Fire-Resistant Landscape
By Douglas Kent (Wilderness Press) \$21.95

This unique form of landscaping design keeps your property healthy, clean, and clear. Land management expert Douglas Kent, who has been on the front lines of wildfires, shares decades of experience working in

many of the nation’s most flammable areas. With this edition he uses all his years of fire experience to create a comprehensive resource that homeowners and at-risk communities nationwide can use to create more fire-

resistant landscapes and structures. Kent also has more than 30 years of gardening experience and has worked on hundreds of landscape projects.

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

March Library Events

Adult Reading Program continues; Take and Make Kits available

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 retrieve 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.

Copying and printing services are also available on a self-serve basis. Those with a library card can print or copy 10 pages per day for no charge.

For your convenience, tax forms and information on tax preparation help from such organizations as AARP are available on our website. Although we do not stock paper forms, they can be readily printed from the website ppld.org. Again, patrons can print or copy 10 pages per day for free.

The 2021 Winter Adult Reading Program continues through March 31.

A limited number of Take and Make kits is available each week for children (ages are specified on the package), teens, and adults. These are craft items packaged with all needed materials.

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 a newspaper. We do, however, request that you keep your visit relatively brief.

A limited number of donated materials is now being accepted. Please limit these to 10 or fewer items at a time because we lack storage space due to material

quarantine requirements.
All programs are cancelled until further notice, and meeting rooms remain unavailable. Water fountains and children’s play areas are also unavailable.
Masks are required for all patrons age 3 and older, and social distancing is also required.
There is now an indoor book drop available for your returns.
The hours for the Monument Library are 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. 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)

Santa Fe Open Space to open later this year



Above: Ben-Lomond Mountain. Courtesy of El Paso County Parks Department.

By Steve Pate

In the fall of 2004, Tim Watkins wrote the first of several “On the Trail” columns for OCN, encouraging the responsible use of Tri-Lakes area trails by hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians. He urged the

respectful use of the beautiful land in our area and encouraged trail users to treat private landowners and the U.S. Forest Service with courtesy and respect. Watkins worked with Friends of Monument Preserve (FOMP) and others to design and maintain our area

trails.
FOMP has publicized a new area, the Santa Fe Open Space (SFOS), which is scheduled to open to the public in late summer or early fall of this year. This area was formerly known “informally” as the Elephant Rock Open Space.
In 2017, El Paso County purchased 65 acres of pristine land just off the New Santa Fe Regional Trail. The county Parks & Recreation Department has developed a Master Plan for the area, which includes trail design, conservation, cultural considerations, and capital projections.
The SFOS includes ponderosa pines, scrub oaks, and rolling meadows that will allow hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians to get off the well-used Santa Fe Trail. Most of the single-track trails will be relatively easy but still allow great views of Elephant Rock, Ben Lomond Mountain, and mountains along the Front Range—Sundance, Chautauqua, Raspberry, Mount Herman, and others. Around 2 miles of trails are planned.
FOMP has published some excellent information and links to get more details about the SFOS Master Plan and the county write-up laying out features of this open space. The SFOS Master Plan includes cultural and historical timeline, including: The only known inhabitants were Native American tribes that date to the Folsom period 10,000 years ago; more recently the Mountain Ute, Arapahoe, Kiowa, Sioux, Cheyenne and others have been present; and in 1820 an Army expedition led by Major Stephen H. Long camped at the base of what is now known as Elephant Rock—at that time it was called Castle Rock, then Phoebe’s Arch, and so on.
Go to fomp.org. The FOMP site provides direct links to the SFOS Master Plan and the SFOS web page.
Steve Pate can be contacted at stevepate@ocn.me

High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

Gardening for bird safety: ditching the feeders

By Janet Sellers

Our gardens can keep Colorado wildlife wild

Ours is a bird-friendly garden of seed plants and fruiting trees in the bountiful forest environs. With our frigid spring snows, we watch birds from a nearby window. Available resources frequently change in nature and birds adjust; even when we offer winter feeders, the birds exhibit cautious behaviors, landing and leaving abruptly.
Offering feeders seems like an innocent practice, but Colorado Parks and Wildlife actually discourages people putting out feeders between March and November because it attracts bears and other animals. So, what are the bird lovers among us to do to attract just the birds? Parks and Wildlife has these suggestions:

- Add brightly colored, trumpet-shaped flowers around your home to attract hummingbirds, butterflies, and a variety of beneficial insects.
 - Water sources, especially running water, do a better job of attracting a wider variety of birds year-round than a bird feeder.
 - Keep your water sources small. Bears don’t sweat, so larger ponds and uncovered hot tubs can actually attract bears looking for a place to cool off.
- Bird feeders are only appropriate when placed outside in the winter months when bears are hibernating. Being responsible in these ways about attracting birds means we’re doing our part to keep Colorado’s wildlife wild.
Hummingbird male scouts arrive soon
Many of us have long enjoyed watching humming-

birds and putting out feeders. Hummingbirds don’t rely on feeders, requiring blossom nectar and insects in their diet, and hummers must visit 1,000 to 2,000 flowers per day, so planting flowers optimizes their garden visits. Besides feeders attracting bears, Salmonella bacteria are spread at feeders contaminated by feces, or by eating feed off the ground. Salmonella bacteria can also cause illness in humans and domestic animals. Sick birds cannot swallow feed because of an infection in the throat.
Birds care about their people neighbors
For decades, we had a family of magpies living in our pine tree. Daily, one would peer in the window to check on my children napping. Another time, “our” magpie came to the door and started squawking loudly. I opened the door and it hopped along to show me

where my dog was lying in pain, then the magpie flew away, mission accomplished. Some neighbor had illegally put garbage out “to feed the critters” but our dog had gotten out, eaten it, and that rotten garbage killed her.

One year, a blue jay family nesting nearby had watched my outdoor art class every afternoon for weeks. When the babies fledged, they flew to our water fountain, then perched on our easels! They had been secretly observ-

ing us from their nest, and apparently thought of us friends. We were delighted.

Stay tuned for my local hummingbird festival art and etiquette walks and talks. We observe hummingbirds from

last year’s clutch returning to their favorite habitats.

Janet Sellers is an avid gardening ethnobotanist. Contact info: JanetSellers@ocn.me.

Art Matters

Zoom fatigue: Artists have a cure



By Janet Sellers

Zoom viewers report exhaustion at the middle and end of their day. Not to vilify Zoom, but many people are calling any kind of conference call on a screen “zooming.” For my art exhibits (now online) and art classes, we use virtual experiences when a student must self-quarantine or for snow days. Yet we are energized, not taxed.

Our successful experiences may have to do with the way we are doing the experience—the way we are using our eyes and bodies. Artists have always avoided easel fatigue (the close-range viewing of the artworks) with movement and body stance. Artists work many hours a day with the easel at arm’s length but move away from the easel to assess the distanced piece. A human being only takes in the entirety or one part of what they see—it’s one or the other and not simultaneously.

In the studio, we move away from the easel for what I call a “15-foot look” to assess the integrity of the artwork. In a 90-minute class, we get up every 10 or 15 minutes to view our work, we are grasping physical tools and using them, and these micro and macro

movements facilitate vitality and agility. We still do this for Zoom classes. Using a wide-angle external camera really helps when we need to move around to demonstrate techniques and helps with natural eye movement for both teacher and student to view artworks in progress—which is also critical to visual perception and memory skills.

Zoom fatigue

Stanford University researchers have developed the Zoom Exhaustion and Fatigue scale, or ZEF scale, to help measure how much fatigue people are experiencing in the workplace from video conferencing and have identified major causes of screen fatigue with meetings. Four of the identified stressors are:

- 1. The excessive amounts of close-up eye contact and the size of faces on screens is highly intense and unnatural. On Zoom calls, everyone is looking at everyone all the time.
- 2. Seeing yourself during video chats constantly in real-time is fatiguing. Studies show that when you see a reflection of yourself you are more critical of yourself.

- 3. Video chats dramatically reduce our usual mobility.
- 4. The cognitive load is much higher on video chats.

I asked one of my colleagues at our weekly meeting with Singularity University about virtual reality (VR), because he is researching virtual reality for education at Stanford. He told me that VR was more tiring than computer screens, because moving around in a virtual lab was physically, psychologically, and mentally unfamiliar.

A balancing act

Moving around throughout the day, particularly getting away from sitting at a screen, looking at distant objects as well as grasping objects several times an hour, is important to offset screen overload and also improves our ability to do our work and feel good throughout the day. Using adaptations such as artists use in the studio, and transferring them to screen life, could help us through these screen life times.

Janet Sellers is an artist, writer, and teacher. Contact her at JanetSellers@ocn.me.



Above; When we touch and flip through book pages, we’re using haptic, or hand-eye, coordination. Coordinating visual focus with haptic feeling has a unique cognitive effect. It puts our minds into an immersive state of concentration, enhancing reading comprehension. In reading books, light reflects off the page before meeting our eyes. When reading from screens, the light comes through the screen directly to our retinas, making it difficult to look at, and we tend to skim read at best. Photo courtesy of Claire Dauwe—and Tate.

Snapshots of Our Community

Bearbotics season begins



Above: Bearbotics team members and Eckehart Zimmerman, local mentor from Triad Engineering, considered mechanical engineering and robot chassis designs on Jan.16. The Build Season for Bearbotics FRC Team 4068 got underway with the For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST) Robotics Competition Kick-off on Jan. 9. From left are Gabe Middleton, David Nunez, Parker Garner and Eckehart Zimmerman. Photo by Finn Williamson.

The Great Fruitcake Toss, Jan. 23



Above: On Jan. 23, the Gail Force, a five-member team from Monument, was once again a participant in The Great Fruitcake Toss in Memorial Park, Manitou Springs. At the invitation of the event organizers, the Manitou Springs Chamber of Commerce, this multi-year, award-winning team gave a mechanically assisted demonstration for the crowd. This annual family-oriented event is celebrating its 25th anniversary and is supported by local and out-of-state sponsors and volunteers. Posing in this photo is the Gail Force team with its slingshot launching device, banner flags and fruitcakes. From left are Barrie Towne, Dave Wittman, Wayne Timura, and Greg Wetzel. Photo by Sharon Williams.

Ham radio field day, Jan. 30

Right: It was cool in the shade for Winter Field Day at Fox Run Park on Jan. 30, but it was good weather to practice doing remote and outdoor amateur radio operations to prepare for emergencies. The hams used a variety of transmission modes and power sources. One operator used Morse code and 5 watts of power and made a contact with a station in Puerto Rico. See <https://w0t1m.com/> for more information. Photo courtesy of Greg Smith.



Archery lesson, Jan. 31



Above: Four-year-old Penny Davey got an archery lesson from her dad, Dan, on Jan. 31. The site is in the open space behind the Lake of the Rockies community in Monument. There’s a sandy section where Penny could shoot her arrows without any danger of hitting people or animals. Photo by Michael Weinfeld.

LEOs sort eyeglass donations



Above: Members of the El Paso County Tri-Lakes Lions LEO Youth Community Service club gathered Super Bowl Sunday, Feb. 7, to sort, count, and categorize eyeglasses donations from area residents. A total of 196 eyeglasses, miscellaneous vision products, and 298 hard and soft eyeglass cases were contributed. They filled 10 boxes, which were loaded into local Lions Club President Jim Naylor's SUV for shipping to Lions International. Front row, from left are Juliana Strickling, Hannah Hermann, Kamdyn Hinderberger, Deirdra Tighe, Olivia Tighe, and Adelyne Thompson. Back row, from left are Tri-Lakes Lions Club President Jim Naylor and LEO Coordinator Gerry Hinderberger. *Photo by Gordon Reichal.*

Today I Choose to be Happy

Right: A timely inspirational message on a random painted rock brings joy to new year hikers and bikers in Monument. Often these decorative rocks of varying size are spotted in many locations, around lamp posts, placed up in a tree at the dog park, throughout the Tri-Lakes area and at Fox Run Regional Park. Painted rocks in unexpected places always bring smiles and an extra "uplift" to the day! *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*



Plane rides the train, Feb. 13



Above: I looked to the train tracks above Dirty Woman Park on Feb. 13 to see a normal cargo of what I thought was a windmill blade atop the flat car. Then I realized it was very unusual, because it was painted green. After a couple of minutes, I saw the windows along the side of the fuselage and for the first time after 15 years watching from my window, I witnessed the body of an airplane being transported via train. *Photo by John Howe.*

Winter watering, Feb. 19



Above: Tia Mayer of Monument, a volunteer for the town, piled snow around the trees and plants in the garden in front of the Chamber of Commerce Community Meeting House on Highway 105 on Feb.19. Winter watering is important in Colorado because of drought and wind. Since you can't use a hose when the ground is frozen, snow is a good substitute. *Photo by Michael Weinfeld.*

Mystery and suspense in Monument



Above: On Feb. 20, local author Diane Campbell, seated, visited Covered Treasures Bookstore in Monument to tell readers about her first book, *Point Blank*, which won first place in the Genesis award in the mystery/suspense/thriller genre. *Photo by Lisa Hatfield.*

Virtual wine tasting fund raiser



Above: Virtual wine tasting: where you can attend virtually by Zoom and sample Colorado wines. Theresa Odello, recreation coordinator, El Paso County Recreation and Cultural Services, delivered the wines contactless to the participants from The Wine Seller, which co-sponsored the event along with the UVA Wine Bar. Proceeds from the event went to El Paso County Nature Centers, a 501C3 organization. Residents of northern El Paso County look forward to a new nature center opening in their part of the county. For more information regarding the new nature center, go to <https://communityservices.elpasoco.com/el-paso-county-northern-nature-center/>. *Photo by Marlene Brown.*

PLFD wildfire training, Feb. 20



Above: Palmer Lake Fire Department's B Shift trained with the S-131 course from the National Wildfire Coordinating Group on February 20. Assistant Chief John Vincent, not shown, and Capt. Weston Oesterreich, standing, emphasized a point here about the qualities of a good fire lookout, whose job is the most important one on the wildfire. This firefighter is the communication link with the outside world during a wildland fire and must pay close attention to fire potential, fuel (vegetation) distribution, weather conditions, safety zones, and alternative escape routes for firefighters. The most important goal is not to save buildings but for everyone to come home safely at the end of the day. *Photo by Lisa Hatfield.*

Tri-Lakes Women’s Club contest raises over \$10,000



Above: The Tri-Lakes Women’s Club (TLWC) held its first-ever virtual fund-raising contest to find out “Who is your favorite cat or dog?” Jojo, owned by Dirk and Laura Stamp of Monument, was named Grand Champion. Jojo greets customers as they come to the Wine Seller, a business that was a Bronze Sponsor of the contest. There

were 110 entries with 241 participants in the contest that raised over \$10,000 for grants. All the money will be given to nonprofits in the Tri-Lakes area. The club has granted over \$1 million in its 45 years as a charity organization.
Left: From left are TLWC board member Lori Marriner; TLWC charitable



events treasurer Barb Betzler; TLWC co-President Jan McKinley; Dirk Stamp, owner of The Wine Seller with his dog, Jojo; fundraiser Chair and board member Linda Vernon; and TLWC co-President Judy Sawyer. *Photo courtesy of Linda Vernon.*
Center: The honor of Top Dog went to



Willie. His certificate was presented by fundraiser Chair Linda Vernon, left, to Gail Wittman, who owns Willie with husband, Dave. *Photo by Jan McKinley.*
Right: Among the felines, Beau, owned by Suzanne Dominowski (in photo) and husband, John, was named Purrfect Cat. *Photo by John Dominowski.*

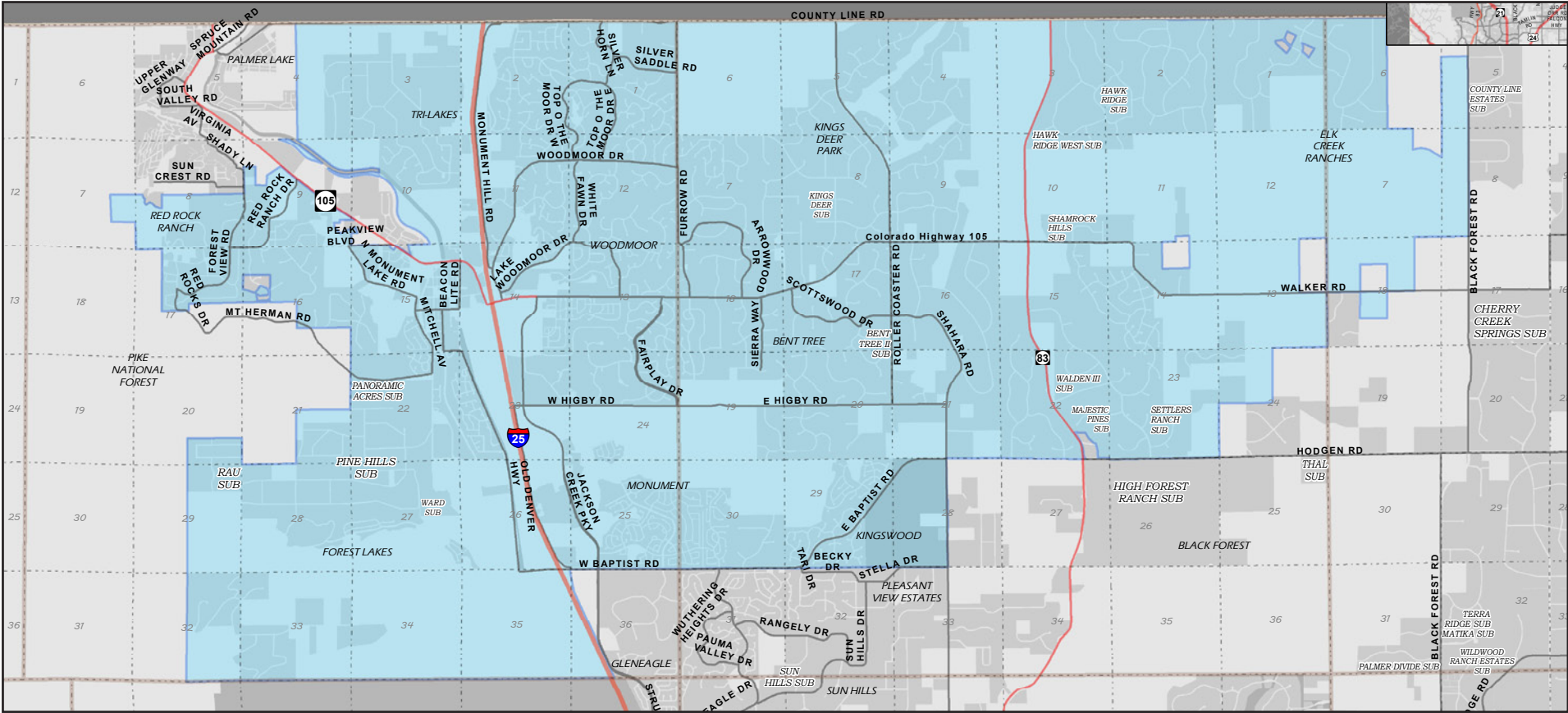
Renewing made easy



Left: El Paso County has made it easier to renew your vehicle tags and registration in the Tri-Lakes area at the new kiosk inside the King Soopers on Baptist Road. Christine Brown, pictured, shows how easy it is to renew your tags and registration. No waiting. No appointment necessary. “It makes it so easy and you get your stickers right on the spot,” says Brown. “It’s so much easier than having to go to the Springs. I was wishing that we had some place to go here in Monument, and now we do.” In an instant you are done, and you have your new registration and tags in hand. For more information about renewing your vehicles, go to epcdrives.com. *Photo by Marlene Brown.*

Which districts do you live in?

The Tri-Lakes area is composed of many interleaved layers of jurisdiction and taxation. The well-informed resident should be able to identify which (if any) municipality, metropolitan district, water and sanitation district, fire protection district, school district, and homeowners association collects taxes and fees and provides services to their home. **Hint to property owners:** You can also learn a lot by looking at your property tax bill. Make sure all members of your household, not just the billpayer, know the answers! See www.ocn.me/maps.htm for a list of clickable links so you can zoom in. To give you a sample of what those maps show, we have printed below the map for the the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District.



OCN photo contest winner



Above: While returning home on Jan. 2 after walking in the Greenland Open Space, I could tell the sunset was going to be good. When I got off I-25 in Monument, the sunset was great. I pulled over on Second Street just west of Highway 105 to hurriedly capture the sunset on my phone with the Christmas lights in the foreground. *Photo by Vernon Smith.*

Keep them coming! Send your best “Life in Tri-Lakes” photo to editor@ocn.me no later than **Mar. 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.

Why advertise in OCN?

- **OCN is mailed FREE to every resident and business in the Tri-Lakes area.** We mail more than 21,000 copies every month and put another 700 copies in stacks throughout the area. OCN has the largest mailed circulation and the third-largest circulation among local newspapers in El Paso County after *The Gazette* and *The Colorado Springs Independent*. We put copies of OCN into the hands of those people most likely to buy your products or services: local residents and businesses.
- **OCN is a primary source for Tri-Lakes area news.** Since its founding in 2001, OCN has been presenting unbiased, detailed coverage of Tri-Lakes area governmental entities and their deliberations and actions. Credibility is key. Advertising in a credible medium typically rubs off on the advertisers in that media.
- **OCN gives preference to Tri-Lakes area businesses.** As part of OCN’s long-standing commitment to encouraging the economic health of the Tri-Lakes area, we offer a significantly discounted ad rate to Tri-Lakes area businesses as a way to help local businesses like yours succeed.
- **OCN’s low ad rates and monthly publication schedule help stretch your ad budget.** OCN has one of the lowest ad costs per printed copy of any local publication. Since OCN is a monthly publication, your ad is out there for a month—more than four times longer than other local papers. Many of our advertisers tell us they’re still getting calls in the third and fourth week of the month.
- **OCN doesn’t use contracts.** You aren’t tied down. Adjust your advertising month-to-month to meet your changing needs. Our advertisers advertise with us because they see benefit in it, not because they’re bound by a contract they signed months before. To reward frequent advertisers, OCN has a Frequent Advertiser Bonus (FAB) rewards program. You earn up to 10% of your ad cost as a reward you can use to reduce the cost of future OCN advertising. The more you advertise with OCN, the more you save. Thanks to our FAB rewards program, OCN advertisers have saved more than \$91,800!
- **You are supporting a good thing.** Your advertising dollars support a unique all-volunteer, Tri-Lakes-focused effort to present factual, comprehensive news to all Tri-Lakes area residents and businesses.

And the best reason of all: It works!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Our Community Notices

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

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

Everybody needs a little help sometimes. Pikes Peak Suicide Prevention Connection has a support group for young people, Teen Talk Group, that meets **Sundays** at 6 p.m. The Adult Peers Support Group meets **Mondays**, 7-8 p.m. The Colorado Crisis Services Line is available 24/7. Call 1-844-493-TALK (8255). For more information visit pikespeaksuicideprevention.org, or call 719-573-7447, or text 719-232-4875, or email 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. For more information, call 719-481-4864.

COVID vaccine information

In El Paso County, vaccination phase 1B.2 began Feb. 8 and vaccination phases 1A and 1B are 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 follow 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.

The Y’s Spring Youth Sports

Register today for flag football, volleyball & soccer. Find out more at ppymca.org/springsports See ad on page 6.

Monument Hill Kiwanis grants, apply by May 15

The Monument Hill Foundation, the charitable arm of the Monument Hill Kiwanis Club, has an annual granting program. Grants are awarded to charities as defined by the IRS, to various qualifying youth activities, and to schools for various educational activities and scholarships. Applications will be accepted from **April 15** through **May 15**. The grant application is available at monumenthillfoundation.org (select “Apply for a Grant”)

Tri-Lakes Women’s Club 2021 Grant Process is now open

The Tri-Lakes Women’s Club’s (TLWC) grant application for 2021 will be available from now through **Mar. 31** on the club’s website, 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. TLWC 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, or visit www.tlwc.net.

McCord’s Garden Center is open

Spring is on its way. The garden center, located at 2720 McShane Dr., Monument. For more information, call 719-375-3573 or visit www.mccordgardens.com. See ad on page 5 for a landscaping project gift certificate offer.

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, 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 technology, 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, 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.

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

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

MVEA board nominations open

The board election will take place during the annual meeting June 3. If you are interested in being a candidate, find application details at www.mvea.coop. For more information, phone 719-494-2528 or email candidate@mvea.org. See ad on page 12.

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.

Driver and vehicle services available online and at kiosks

Most driver and vehicle services can be completed online at mydmv.colorado.gov. Residents can renew their motor vehicle registration online at mydmv.colorado.gov, by phone at 520-6240, by mail, or by self-service kiosks at King Soopers (1070 W. Baptist Rd., Monument) or at the North Motor Vehicle Office at 8830 N. Union Blvd. (24/7 kiosk). For more information, phone 520-6200 or visit epcdrives.com. See ad on page 2 and photo on page 27.

LEAP—Help for heating bills

The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) is a federally funded program that provides cash assistance to help families and individuals pay a portion of winter

home heating costs. The eligibility period for LEAP runs **Nov. 1-April 30**. Application packets will automatically be mailed to residents who received LEAP assistance last year at the address where they were living at that time. To find out if you qualify for LEAP, call 1-866 HEAT-HELP (866-432-8435) or visit www.colorado.gov/cdhs/leap.

Free income tax help, ends April 15

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program provides free income tax preparation assistance to individuals and families with a household income of \$56,000 a year or less. To find out if you qualify or to schedule an appointment, call 2-1-1 or text VITANOW to 85511 Mon. through Fri., 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Openings for Monument’s Planning Commission and Board of Adjustments

The Town of Monument has openings on its Planning Commission and Board of Adjustments. For more information, visit www.townofmonument.org.

MVEA rebates

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

NAMI free virtual support groups

NAMI’s Connection Support Group provides weekly peer support for anyone with a mental health diagnosis. It is facilitated by people managing their own mental illnesses and structured to meet the diverse needs of those with depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and more. Connections meets Tuesdays, 7-8:30 p.m. You can fill out a new participant form at www.namicoloradosprings.org/connection-support-group.html. The weekly Family Support Group provides peer support for family members as their loved ones encounter the ups and downs that come with living with mental illness and working toward recovery. This group meets Thursdays, 7-8:30 p.m. For links to the above information and other groups, visit www.namicoloradosprings.org. Info: 719-473-8477, email info@namicos.org, or visit www.namicoloradosprings.org.

Senior citizen luncheons and more

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

Volunteer for Tri-Lakes Cares

There are many areas within Tri-Lakes Cares that you can help serve. Volunteers interact with clients, stock the food pantry, distribute grocery orders, process donations, pack Snack Packs for local youth, and contribute in many other ways to the success of Tri-Lakes Cares. Becoming a volunteer is easy and fun. For details, contact Volunteer

Coordinator Nichole Pettigrew, 719-481-4864 x113, VolunteerCoordinator@Tri-LakesCares.org; or visit <https://trilakescares.org/volunteer/>.

Small-business grants available

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

St. Peter Catholic School now enrolling

St. Peter is offering in-person learning five days a week. Preschool through eighth grade feature academics, athletics, and faith formation. Visit the website for a virtual tour or call the school to schedule an in-person tour. For more information, call 719-481-1855 or visit petertherockschool.org. See ad on page 2.

Monument Academy now enrolling

Monument Academy is a free public school of choice and features character education, academic rigor, and dedicated teachers. For more information, visit www.monumentacademy.net.

Free services for seniors

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

Silver Key Calls of Reassurance available

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

Help protect firefighters and yourselves

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

Can you volunteer today?

Links to local organizations with an immediate need for

volunteers are listed on the county’s website, www.elpasocountyhealth.org/community-resources-0, for groups like Care and Share, Crossfire Ministries, Citizen’s Project (email joy@citizensproject.org for virtual opportunities to help with Census 2020), blood donations, Early Connections (volunteer from home opportunity), foster an animal, Medical Reserve Corps of El Paso County, Salvation Army, Silver Key, and United Way (ongoing opportunities).

Tri-Lakes Cares needs us more than ever

Tri-Lakes Cares is the only food pantry and human services organization located in and serving northern El Paso County through emergency, self-sufficiency, and relief programs. The community-based, volunteer-supported center is a critical resource for our neighbors in need. The best way to help support Tri-Lakes Cares is to make a financial donation. For more information about Tri-Lakes Cares or how you can help, contact Nicole Pettigrew, Director of Volunteers and Community Partnership, at 719-481-4864 Ext. 111; communityengagementmanager@tri-lakescares.org; or visit www.tri-lakescares.org.

Become a CASA volunteer

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

I-25 MyWay commuting options website

Visit www.i25myway.org and enter starting and ending ZIP codes for personalized I-25 commuting solutions and savings estimates. The website will help you arrange the details and free test commutes, including carpools, van pools, and the Bustang South Line. The site will run through the end of construction in 2022.

Sign up for “Reverse 9-1-1” emergency notifications to your cell phones

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

Friends of Monument Preserve (FOMP) seeks board members

FOMP manages a 1,000-acre hiking/biking/equestrian trail area. The group is recruiting new board members. For more information, visit www.fomp.org.

Senior Beat newsletter—subscribe for free

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

Our Community Calendar

By Judy Barnes,
Community Calendar Editor

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

The unpredictability of the COVID-19 situation presents scheduling challenges to area governance entities and other organizations. Because OCN is a monthly publication, readers should assume that information published in this issue is subject to change and event information should be confirmed a day or two before the event by calling the information number or checking the organization’s website.

Many entries show dates even though the event has been canceled or suspended. The date indicates when the event was planned to be held or when it would normally have been held.

GOVERNMENTAL BODIES

- **Woodmoor Water & Sanitation District Board Meeting**, Mon., **Mar. 8**, 1 p.m., 1845 Woodmoor Dr., Monument. Meets 2nd Mon. each month. Info: 719-488-2525, www.woodmoorwater.com.
- **Tri-Lakes Wastewater Facility Joint Use Committee Meeting**, Tue., **Mar. 9**, 10 a.m., 16510 Mitchell Ave. Meets 2nd Tue. each month. Info: Bill Burks, 719-481-4053.
- **El Paso Board of County Commissioners Meeting, live-streamed at www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel**, Tue., **Mar. 9**, 9 a.m. Centennial Hall, 200 South Cascade Ave., Suite 150, Colo. Springs. Meets every Tue. Info: 719-520-6430, www.agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso/meeting/list.
- **Palmer Lake Sanitation District Board Meeting**,

- call in only: 650-479-3208, Access Code 76439078**, Wed., **Mar. 10**, 9 a.m., 120 Middle Glenway. Meets 2nd Wed. each month. Info: 719-481-2732. www.plsd.org.
- **Monument Planning Commission Meeting**, Wed., **Mar. 10**, 6 p.m. Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Meets 2nd Wed. each month. Public attendance will be limited to remote attendance. To see the options for remote public participation in each meeting, visit www.townofmonument.org/263/Planning-Commission-Board-of-Adjustment. Info: 719-884-8017, www.townofmonument.org.
 - **Medicare and COBRA—Don’t Get Bit!** Thu., **Mar. 11**, noon. Medicare Lunch and Learn Series, Pikes Peak Area Agency on Aging and Pikes Peak Library District virtual, one-hour virtual session. Registration is required at ppacg.org/events at no cost for all classes; 2nd Thur. of each month.
 - **Monument Academy School Board Meeting, Zoom meeting; email Board@monumentacademy.net and someone will respond with a meeting invitation. The audio will also be recorded and posted.** Thu., **Mar. 11**, 6 p.m., Lab 312, 1150 Village Ridge Point, Monument. Meets 2nd Thu. Each month. Info: 719-481-1950, www.monumentacademy.net/school-board.
 - **Palmer Lake Town Board of Trustees Meeting**, Thu., **Mar. 11**, 6 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Meets 2nd Thu. each month. Info: 719-481-2953, www.townofpalmerlake.com.
 - **Lewis-Palmer School District 38 Board Meeting, live stream on the district’s YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/LPSDCCommunity**, Mon., **Mar. 15**, 6-10 p.m., Learning Center, 146 Jefferson St., Monu-

- ment. Meets 3rd Mon. each month. Find the agenda and supporting documents at <https://go.boarddocs.com/co/lewispalmer/Board.nsf/vpublic>. Info: 719-481-9546, vwood@lewispalmer.org, www.lewispalmer.org.
- **Monument Board of Trustees Meeting, livestreamed at bit.ly/2uZxjfa**, Mon., **Mar. 15**, 6:30 p.m., Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Meets 1st and 3rd Mon. each month. To participate remotely


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- by phone, call 1-844-992-4726 (Access Code: 126 084 9803). Info: 719-884-8017, www.townofmonument.org.
- **Wescott Fire Protection District Board Meeting, possible Zoom meeting, check the website**, Tue., **Mar. 16**, 4 p.m., Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Dr. Meets 3rd Tue. each month. Info: 719-488 8680, www.wescott-fire.org.
 - **Monument Sanitation District Board Meeting, Zoom meeting. Find joining instructions on the website**, Wed., Mar. 17, 9 a.m., 130 2nd St. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: 719-481-4886, www.colorado.gov/msd.
 - **Academy Water and Sanitation District Board Meeting, the public can join the Skype meeting: <https://join.skype.com/PAcujKTn7Nrh>. Check the website for a link: <https://academywsd.colorado.gov/notices-and-alerts>**. Wed., **Mar. 17**, 6 p.m., Wescott Fire Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Dr. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: 719-481-0711, <https://academywsd.colorado.gov>.
 - **Palmer Lake Town Planning Commission Meeting**, Wed., **Mar. 17**, 6 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: 719-481-2953, www.townofpalmerlake.com.
 - **Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District Board Meeting**, Wed., **Mar. 17**, 7 p.m., Station 1, 11445 Teachout Rd. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: 719-495-4300, www.bffire.org.
 - **El Paso County Planning Commission Meeting, live-streamed at ww.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel**, Thu., **Mar. 18**, 1 p.m., 200 S. Cascade Ave., Suite 150, Colo. Springs. Meets 1st & 3rd Thu. (if required) each month. Info: 719-520-6300, elpasoco.com/public-meetings/.
 - **Donala Water & Sanitation District Board Meeting, check the website for the access code for the electronic meeting**, Thu., **Mar. 18**, 1:30 p.m., 15850 Holbein Dr. Meets 3rd Thu. each month. Info: 719-488-3603, www.donalawater.org.
 - **Triview Metropolitan District Board Meeting, check the website**, Thu., **Mar. 18**, 5:30 p.m., 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302, Monument. Meets 3rd Thu. each month. Info: 719-488-6868, www.triviewmetro.com.
 - **Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District Board Meeting, Zoom meeting. Find joining instructions at www.tlmfire.org or contact Jennifer Martin**, 719-484-0911. Wed., **Mar. 24**, 6:30 p.m., TLMFPD Station 1, 18650 Hwy 105. Meets 4th Wed. each month. Info: Jennifer Martin, 719-484-0911, www.tlmfire.org.
 - **Woodmoor Improvement Association Board Meeting**, Wed., **Mar. 24**, 7 p.m., Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. Meets 4th Wed. each month. Info: 719-488-2693, www.woodmoor.org.
 - **Palmer Lake Town Board of Trustees Workshop**, Thu., **Mar. 25**, 5 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Meets 2nd Thu. each month. Info: 719-481-2953, www.townofpalmerlake.com.
 - **Palmer Lake Town Board of Trustees Meeting**, Thu., **Mar. 25**, 6 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Meets 2nd Thu. each month. Info: 719-481-2953, www.townofpalmerlake.com.

WEEKLY & MONTHLY EVENTS

- **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, 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 ap-

- pointment. 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, both in-person and livestream at tlumc.org/live** every **Sun.**, 8, 9:30, & 11 a.m. Watch live or on replay: facebook.com/tlumc, youtube.com/tlumc. Registration required for in-person worship tlumc.org/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 N. Chestnut St., room 252, Colo. Springs. Guests welcome. Info: Glenn, 719-260-6551; www.artfully-speaking.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 via Zoom. Call/text Stacey 206-384-8285 or see 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. Music on the Patio every weekend in March. 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., Mar. 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.
- **Western Museum of Mining & Industry (WMMI) Lecture Series, check the website**, Tue., 7-8 p.m., 225 North Gate Blvd. (I-25 Exit 156 A). RSVP & Info: 488-0880, RSVP@wmmi.org, www.wmmi.org.
- **Black Forest AARP Potluck Lunch & Meeting, all in person AARP activities are canceled through the first quarter of 2021**, Wed., **Mar. 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., **Mar. 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., **Mar. 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., **Mar. 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., **Mar. 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., Mar. 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., **Mar. 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., **Mar. 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 2 nd Sat. each month. Info: 719-460-4179, www.palmerlakeart-group.com.
- **Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group, virtual meeting**, Sat., **Mar. 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., **Mar. 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, SUSPEND-ED**, Wed., **Mar. 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., **Mar. 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., **Mar. 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 videocon-**

- ference*, Wed., **Mar. 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., **Mar. 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@monumental-impact.org, monumentalimpact.org.
 - **Palmer Lake Historical Society Meeting, SUSPENDED**, Thu., **Mar. 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., **Mar. 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., **Mar. 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., **Mar. 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., **Mar. 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., **Mar. 20**, 3-4:30 p.m., 3254 Forest 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., **Mar. 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, possibly virtual**, Tue., **Mar. 23**, 11:30 a.m., 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., **Mar. 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.
 - **Senior Social, all in person AARP activities are canceled through the first quarter of 2021**, Wed., **Mar. 24**, 1-4 p.m., 12455 Black Forest Rd. Meets 4th Wed. each month except Nov. & Dec. Info: aarpchapter-

- 1100blackforest.weebly.com.
- **Friends of Fox Run Park, Zoom meeting**, Thu., **Mar. 25**, 6-7:30 p.m., Email 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.
 - **Foot Care Clinic**, Fri., **Mar. 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, 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.
 - **Myasthenia Gravis Association of Colorado Support Group**. Location varies. Info: Carolyn, 488-3620, www.4-mga.org, 303-360-7080, 4mga@4-mga.org.

SPECIAL EVENTS

- **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. See ad on page 7
- **Grace Best Master Plan Steering Committee Apr. 14th Community Dialogue re: future plans for the Grace Best facility**. For more information on this project www.lewispalmer.org/GraceBestPlan or contact info@lewispalmer.org or (719)785-4223. See ad on page 2
- **Ham (Amateur) Radio License Class, on Zoom** Sat., **Apr. 17**, Sun., **Apr. 18**, Sat., **Apr. 24**, plus one in-person test session Apr. 25 in Monument. Sponsored by Tri-Lakes Monument Radio Association. The worldwide excitement of Amateur Radio and the very best emergency communications capability available. No Morse code required. Students must buy text book. To register, https://w0tlm.com/radio-classes/tech-registration. Contact Bob Witte KØNR bob@k0nr.com.

Content

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

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

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

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

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Our community calendar carries listings on a space-available basis for Tri-Lakes events that are sponsored by local governmental entities and not-for-profit organizations. We include events that are open to the general public and are not religious or self-promotional in nature. If space is available, complimentary calendar listings are included, when requested, for events advertised in the current issue. To have your event listed at no charge in Our Community Calendar, please call (719) 339-7831 or send the information to calendar@ocn.me 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 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. 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, April 3

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

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



Our Community News

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

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Editorial content: editor@ocn.me
Event information: calendar@ocn.me

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Support Our Community Advertise in OCN!

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

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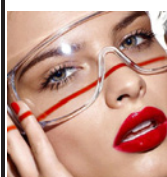
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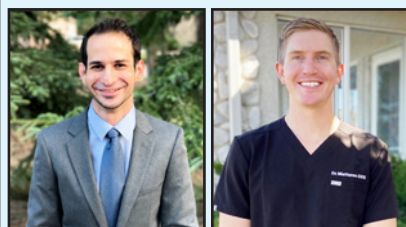
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