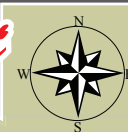


# Happy New Year! from the all-volunteer staff at Our Community News

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Issue #251 — Volume 22 Number 1 — Saturday, January 1, 2022

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See page 28.**

## Local Events

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

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

- Monument Board of Trustees, Mon., Jan. 3, 17, 6:30 p.m.
- Woodmoor Water & Sanitation District Board, Mon., Jan. 10, 1 p.m.
- Tri-Lakes Wastewater Facility Joint Use Committee, Tue., Jan. 11, 10 a.m.
- D-38 DAAC, Tue., Jan. 11. 7-8:30 p.m.
- Palmer Lake Sanitation District Board, Wed., Jan. 12, 9 a.m.
- Monument Planning Commission, Wed., Jan. 12, 6 p.m.
- Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, Thu., Jan. 13, 27, 5 p.m.
- Monument Academy School Board, Thu., Jan. 13, 6 p.m.
- Donald Wescott Fire Protection District Board, Tue., Jan 18, 4 p.m.
- Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District Board, Wed., Jan 19, 7 p.m.
- Monument Sanitation District Board, Wed., Jan. 19, 9 a.m.
- Academy Water and Sanitation District Board, Wed., Jan. 19, 6 p.m.
- Palmer Lake Planning Commission, Wed., Jan. 19, 6 p.m.
- El Paso County Planning Commission, Thu., Jan. 20, 9 a.m.
- Triview Metropolitan District Board, Thu., Jan. 20, 5:30 p.m.
- Donala Water & Sanitation District Board, Thu., Jan. 20, 1:30 p.m.
- D-38 Board, Mon., Jan. 24, 6-10 p.m.
- Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District Board, Wed., Jan. 26, 6:30 p.m.
- Woodmoor Improvement Association Board, Wed., Jan. 26, 7 p.m.

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## Circulation

Print Run: 22,160  
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*Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District and Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, Dec. 8*

## Historic fire district unification approved



**Above:** From left, DWFPD's Interim Fire Chief Warren Jones and board Chairman Mark Gunderman, and TLMFPD's board President John Hildebrandt and Fire Chief Andy Kovacs at the Monument Marketplace Clock Tower on Dec. 8. Photo courtesy of TLMFPD. **Right:** From left, TLMFPD Board Secretary Michael Smaldino and President John Hildebrandt, and DWFPD Chairman Mark Gunderman and Secretary Larry Schwarz sign the historic contract for services agreement in the Tri-Lakes Monument Administration Office board room on Dec. 8. Pictured in the background are Fire Chief Andy Kovacs and Interim Fire Chief Warren Jones. Those who witnessed the historic event included El Paso County Commissioner for District 1 Holly Williams, Monument Police Department Chief Sean Hemingway, Palmer Lake Fire Department Fire Chief Christopher McCarthy, board members, executive staff, and many firefighters from both districts, along with family members and friends, all. *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*



*By Natalie Barszcz*  
The Board of Directors of the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) held a special meeting on Dec. 8 to sign the historic Administrative and Operational Services Contract between Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District and Donald Wescott Fire Protection District. See TLMFPD and DWFPD articles on pages 4 and 6.

The TLMFPD Board of Directors are: President John Hildebrandt, Vice President Roger Lance, Treasurer Ja-

son Buckingham, Secretary Michael Smaldino, and Directors Tom Kelly, Terri Hayes, and Tom Tharnish.

The DWFPD Board of Directors are: Chairman Mark Gunderman, Treasurer Duane Garrett, Secretary Larry Schwarz, and Directors Charles Fleece and Joyce Hartung.

TLMFPD Fire Chief Andy Kovacs thanked everyone from both organizations for their support and said the TLMFPD president and the DWFPD chairman would take the first steps toward unification and sign an ad-

ministrative and operational services agreement contract that will begin on Jan. 1, 2022. "Though relatively new to the area, I have come to understand the historical significance of this event, and could not be more elated," Kovacs said. "Formalizing the relationship will better serve the community and both organizations for many years to come."

After the Pledge of Allegiance, Chaplain Greg Fell of the Monument Police Department led the large gathering in an invocation for the joining of

**UNIFICATION (Cont. on 2)**

*Monument Academy School Board, Dec. 6 and 9*

## Monument Academy struggles with concerns about leadership



**Above:** At Monument Academy's Dec. 9 board meeting, nearly 100 parents, staff, teachers, and administrators attended to discuss concerns with leadership. MA's lawyer, one teacher, and five parents spoke during public comment. Board members made a group statement and shared a student's perspective, voting to hire a leadership consultant, review policies, and increase communication to get back on track. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

*By Jackie Burhans*  
The Monument Academy (MA) School Board met twice in December. The first meeting was a lengthy executive session to discuss employment matters and administrators' performance. The regular meeting focused on addressing parents' and teachers' concerns with the leadership and organizational structure.

### Employment and performance discussed in lengthy executive session

On Dec. 6, the Monument Academy board held a special meeting at the East Campus to adjourn into executive session "to receive legal advice regarding employment matters and to discuss the performance of East Campus administrators and central administrators." MA

lawyer Brad Miller and Chief Financial Officer Marc Brocklehurst attended.

Board President Ryan Graham, speaking to nearly a dozen attendees before the executive session, noted that the regular meeting would allow public comments, board discussion, and action items. The attendees remained in the otherwise empty meeting room for

**MA (Cont. on 10)**





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### UNIFICATION (Cont. from 1)

both districts' personnel and the unification.

Kovacs also held a moment of silence for the recent passing of American Medical Response Paramedic

Douglas McIntyre, who worked for the Wescott ambulance service.

Holly Williams, El Paso County commissioner for District 1, said the following:

- This step toward unification is so important because we have so many fire districts and to see two of them combine territories is amazing, and the commissioners have been watching closely.
  - There is a lot of emphasis in the region on Wildland Fire Mitigation, and state grants will be available.
- "Thank you for putting your lives on the line and for your willingness to combine," said Williams.

Interim Fire Chief Warren Jones said, "After over 40 years in the fire service, this is by far the most gratifying moment." He added:

- Both districts have wonderful men and women that go out every day responding to calls to help the citizens of both communities.
- The benefits of this merger are going to be astounding and long lasting to the citizens and all of Northern El Paso County.
- There have been a "lot of folks" trying to make this happen for a long



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time and he just stepped in to “pull the levers at the right time.”

- This merger could not have been done without Kovacs and the board presidents, and their generosity and forward

thinking in representing the boards and the citizens.

Jones thanked the personnel of both districts and the DWFPD executive staff—Battalion Chiefs Scott Ridings, Shannon Balvanz, and Sean Pearson, and Administrative Assistant Stacey Popovich—for all of their support. “They did not know how the unification project would work out, or how they would be affected by it, but they provided all the support needed to make the merger happen,” said Jones.

Hildebrandt said, “It has been a long time coming, and it is the courage of Wescott that has propelled this forward, and this would not be happening if it was not a ‘win, win, win’ for TLMFPD and DWFPD, but most importantly for the residents of both districts.” And he said:

- The combined districts will now have a station in

a critical area of the district.

- There will be a larger number of personnel to respond to incidents and they will train together as one.
- Additional water tenders will be available to respond to rural areas with limited water supply.
- Residents will see faster response times and an ambulance service that will be available to respond more frequently from Wescott’s Station 1.

“This is a proud time for all of us,” said Hildebrandt.

Gunderman said, “Lots of times things get derailed because egos get in the way, and this would not have been possible without the leadership and humility of Jones and Kovacs” and “the firefighters working together will help make this possible and make it stick, and although a

lot of anxiety for sure, it will be seamless to the residents and a testament to both organizations of how culturally aligned and professional they are.”

**Note:** After the speeches, TLMFPD Board President John Hildebrandt and Secretary Michael Smaldino, and DWFPD Board Chairman Mark Gunderman and Secre-


tary Larry Schwarz signed the historic “contract for services” intergovernmental agreement in the Tri-Lakes Monument Administration Office board room on Dec. 8 at about 6:35 p.m. The event was witnessed by all those in attendance.

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


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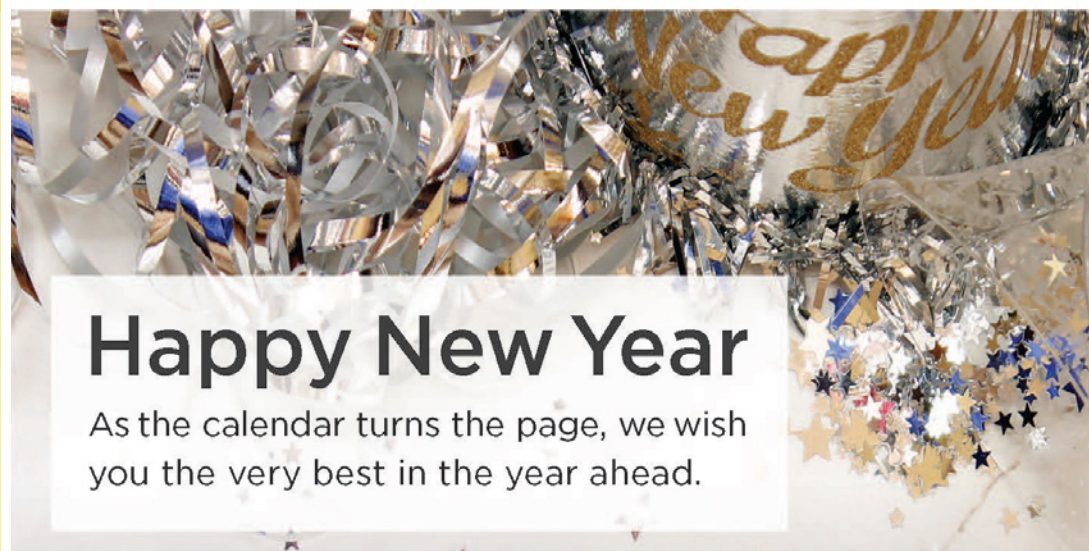
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## Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, Dec. 1

## Major step taken toward unification

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) meeting on Dec. 1, the board approved a contract for a service agreement with Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) and witnessed the swearing in of a newly promoted lieutenant.

Director Terri Hayes was expected to arrive late, but the meeting ended before that occurred.

**Unification update**

Fire Chief Andy Kovacs said the following:

- TLMFPD and DWFPD had “put the cart before the horse” a little bit and had the “first” execu-

tive staff meeting with the three battalion chiefs from Wescott.

- The operational meeting was productive and lasted four hours, and it is exciting to finally see the unification come to fruition.
- The details are being worked on, to figure out what it will look like on Jan. 1.
- The “best and the brightest” were in the room putting all the pieces together, and the meetings will continue with operational staff throughout December.

“There is excitement, and it will be a heavy lift in January, but we are getting ready for what comes next,” said Kovacs. See [www.ocn.me/v21n12.htm#tlmfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v21n12.htm#tlmfpd) and #dwfpd.

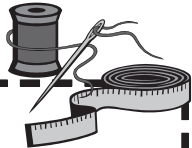
President John Hildebrandt said he wished he could say all of the numbers in the Emergency Services Consultants International (ESCI) study are “rock solid,” unfortunately they are not, but they are not enough to prevent the unification. About \$238,000 will be needed for salary equalizations, but the report indicated only \$158,000, so Wescott will need to add about \$90,000 for the salaries and benefits, said Hildebrandt.

Jones said he did not know where the number came from either, but numbers were added and it caused manipulative changes that continued throughout the study. “It is a number that can be handled and taken care of and the problem would be identified by DWFPD, and fixed by Jan. 1, and we will be okay,” said Jones.

Hildebrandt said, “When the inclusion is complete and the whole district is paying 18.4 mills (with a mill levy drop for the DWFPD residents) a revenue loss of \$330,000 would occur, but he is comfortable

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with everything in the study financially, and it should not be a problem going forward.” Kovacs said a copy of the ESCI feasibility study is now available on the district website for viewing. See [www.tlmfire.org](http://www.tlmfire.org). Vice President Roger Lance said, “It has been sev-

eral years in the making and a tremendous effort from everyone” and he thanked those involved for making it happen. **Contract for partial services** Hildebrandt said a partial “contract for services” with DWFPD, for Kovacs and Division Chief of Operations

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Jonathan Bradley to lead Wescott from Jan. 1, 2022, will be signed with a transition to a contract for complete services made by about May 2022.

Kovacs said it will be up to the two boards to decide what that contract will be, and that conversation can take place in 2022. If the TLMFPD board approves the contract, DWFPD board Chairman Mark Gunderman and Secretary Larry Schwarz will sign the document on Dec. 8, said Kovacs.

Hildebrandt said the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) for a “contract for services” approved a month ago has one change: a reduction in the charge

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for compensation from \$131,000 per year to \$1 per month for DWFPD.

The board approved the partial contract 6-0 and signed the IGA between DWFPD and TLMFPD. See the DWFPD article on page 6 and the joint meeting article on page 1.

**Staff promotion ceremony**

At the beginning of the meeting, Kovacs administered the oath of office to newly promoted Lt. Steve Peters. Kovacs congratulated Peters and said, “TLMFPD lieutenants are one of the most important positions in the fire service, and not only are they managing the day-to-day operations of crews and personnel, they are often interacting with the public.”

“The company officer role is the “linchpin” to a strong fire district, and there is no better person to assume the new role and responsibilities than Peters,” said Kovacs.

**Station 1 remodel**

Kovacs said the following:

- The final punch list for the Station 1 remodel was comprehensive, and the contractors are about one-third of the way through.
- One item was added after the new gear lockers for the personal protective equipment were found to be the wrong brand and of lesser quality than those previously installed.
- The lockers will be returned to the vendor, and hopefully the same lockers that are in place at Station 2 and 3 can be found.

**Other business**

Town of Monument Director of Public Works/Board Director Tom Tharnish requested the district forward the hydrant locations for installation along Highway 105 for Monument’s pipeline project. Division Chief of Community Risk/Fire Marshal Jamey Bumgarner said he would provide the locations to meet the deadline of Dec. 10.


The meeting adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, Dec. 8 and 15 IGA and 2022 budget approved

*By Natalie Barszcz*

At the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) meeting on Dec. 8, the board signed an Intergovernmental agreement (IGA) partial contract for services with Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection



**In Memorium**  
**Brian Donald Crombie**  
1946-2021

Brian Donald Crombie, 75, of Monument, passed away peacefully in Monterey, CA with family close by on November 22, 2021.

Brian is survived by Sheila, his wife of 50 years, Lara, his daughter and light of his life, and Stuart, his brother, as well as many friends in Minnesota and Colorado.

Brian worked in the printing industry for most of his adult life, retiring from Southern Graphic Systems, Minneapolis, MN in 2012.

Brian was a proud Canadian and passionate hockey player and collector/restorer of vintage sports cars. He was a member of the Minnesota based Vintage Sports Car Racing Club for many years, serving as the club’s Technical Director, as well as a fierce driver of both open and closed-wheel racecars. He enjoyed traveling with his race friends to car events in Europe and the US.

Brian started skating on the streets of Maple Creek, Saskatchewan, as soon as he could walk. He had a life-long connection with hockey, both as a fan and as a skater. Brian served as a Volunteer Coach at the Monument Ice Rinks, working with all ages and all skill levels. He will be remembered for his love of the game and irreverent sense of humor. Al Pedersen, the Ice Rinks manager, says the “place lit up” when Brian was on the ice. Brian was nominated “Exceptional Community Coach” for his work with the Mile High Mites program.

A celebration of life is planned for late June, 2022 in Monument. Memorial donations may be made to St. Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital. Special gratitude and love to the staff of Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula, especially Rosslyn and Arthur in Palliative Medicine, and Brian’s special angel, Breanna, who was with him during his last hours.



**Above:** From left, TLMFPD Fire Chief Andy Kovacs, Lt. Steve Peters, and Jen Jehly are pictured at the swearing-in ceremony for Steve Peters’ recent promotion to lieutenant from Firefighter/Paramedic at the Dec. 1 board meeting. Kovacs administered the oath of office and presented Peters with a lieutenant’s helmet, and his spouse Jehly pinned on the badge of office. *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*

**Correction**

In the OCN December edition, in the TLMFPD article and the Calendar of Events, the Dec. board meeting was listed as Dec. 3, but the meeting occurred on Dec. 1, the day OCN went to press. The error occurred after the Dec. 3 date was announced during the DWFPD Nov. 18 board meeting. OCN regrets any inconvenience that may have resulted.

\*\*\*\*\*

Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday of the month. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Jan. 26 at 6:30 p.m. at TLMFPD Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. For Zoom meeting instructions, agendas, minutes, and updates, visit [www.tlmfire.org](http://www.tlmfire.org) or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

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

District (TLMFPD) and approved the 2022 budget. A “special meeting” was held on Dec. 15 to “tie up a few loose ends” that occurred due to the unification process. The board approved funding for new equipment, the sale of apparatus and equipment, and an acting fire chief position, and received multiple updates.

Director Joyce Hartung was absent on Dec. 8 and 15.

Director Charles Fleece was absent on Dec. 15.

Chairman Mark Gunderman notified the public of the board’s plan to recess and regroup at the TLMFPD Administrative Office during the Dec. 8 meeting for the contract for services celebration, and that the meeting would adjourn from that location.

**Intergovernmental agreement—contract for services**

Interim Fire Chief Warren Jones requested the board adopt the intergovernmental agreement to provide operational and administrative services from TLMFPD, and he said the following:

- The project has been ongoing for about nine months, and in the past 60 days a decision was made to recommend forming a fire authority. See [www.ocn.me/v21n6.htm#dwfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v21n6.htm#dwfpd) and #tlmfpd.
- The partial contract for services would be followed by a full contract, and then a full merger by inclusion with the goal being the equalization of the mill levies.
- TLMFPD Fire Chief Andy Kovacs and Division Chief of Operations Jonathan Bradley will start down the road of unifying the districts immediately.
- Kovacs will be the fire chief for both districts starting Jan. 1.

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• The cost to DWFPD will be \$1 per month for the contract for services.

The board approved the fee of \$1 per month, 4-0.

The DWFPD attorney, Emily Powell of Ireland Stapleton Pryor Pascoe PC law firm, said the contract for services is a “stop gap” to ensure adequate executive staffing before working on the next steps toward unification, and the chief’s salary that was to be paid to TLMFPD for the contract for services will be removed. Both districts have agreed that the fire chief’s salary of \$121,000 can be spent in better ways, said Powell.

The board approved the contract for services with TLMFPD, 4-0.

Kovacs thanked the board for putting their faith and trust in TLMFPD and said, “We hope to serve the district well.”

Jones said the Wescott staff is excited, and the unification will move quickly as the executive staff begin working together, and he requested the board make a motion to direct staff to get the full-service contract going in 2022.

Powell said the hope is to start negotiating this contract to be signed in the first quarter (physical assets, apparatus, stations, and equipment, etc.) of 2022. After that the transfer of employees will happen Jan. 1, 2023, due to complications with wages and benefit transfers, and W-2 forms.

Jones said he has worked with Powell on a similar project in the past and the time passes quickly, and everything worked out well.

The board approved 4-0 to implement the transfer in a timely manner and no later than Jan. 1, 2023.

Jones said the following:

- TLMFPD agreed to lower the cost of the contract for services from \$121,000 annually to \$1 per month and allow the Wescott fire chief salary to equalize the base salaries of the Wescott staff to allow for a more harmonious transfer and integration of staff.
- About \$236,000 would be needed to make that happen. Along with the fire chief salary for 2022, which is about \$128,554; \$12,854 in Fire & Police Pension Association (FPPA) contributions; the \$25,000 for the no longer needed part-time employee salaries; and about \$71,000 in revenue over expenditure, there should be enough to cover bonus salaries.
- A bonus system will avoid a future budget overhead if the merger does not work out.
- The bonus salaries will not count toward the pension system. See TLMFPD article on page 4.

Resident Steve Simpson said, “The bo-

nus pay is a great solution, and it is good not to add an unnecessary overhead, if the merger does not go through, but I am 1,000 percent for this merger.” Simpson thanked Jones and said, “This could not have happened without Jones, and this is the best board he has seen.”

Simpson joined the meeting late because he thought the meeting had occurred on Dec. 7.

Gunderman made a motion to direct the fire chief to develop a salary bonus schedule comparable to TLMFPD until the district staff transfer to TLMFPD.

The board approved the bonus salary, 4-0.

**Proposed 2022 budget—presentation/joint public hearing**

Powell said that after the presentation of the proposed 2022 budget, the board will need to make a motion to open the joint public hearing on the proposed 2022 district and sub-district fiscal year budget for comments after the presentation.

Jones presented the proposed 2022 budget and said:

- Concurrent to the 2022 budget development are the ongoing negotiations with TLMFPD for the unification of the districts.
- If the unification goes ahead, at least one budget amendment will be needed to accommodate the unification and meet the objectives.
- The 2022 budget continues with the current step pay plan, the health insurance plan and other employee benefits, to include a 4% inflation adjustment (the same as TLMFPD—the national average is projected to be 3.9% for 2022).
- Revenue of \$3.3 million is expected in 2022 and expenditures are projected to be about \$3.2 million, leaving an overage of about \$121,000.
- The board has already directed \$50,000 in 2022 to rebuild the district reserves.
- The district will need about \$2.7 million for 23 positions. Only 22 positions will be funded if the unification occurs, with the elimination of the fire chief position. The salary for the fire chief position will be used for another project if the unification is approved.
- There will be about \$450,184 in the budget for non-personnel administrative, emergency operations, facilities, training, and communications expenses.
- There are no capital expenses or purchase of major new or replacement equipment for 2022.
- The most important aspect of

the 2022 budget is building the end-of-year balances and the reserves.

Jones thanked Rachel Dunn, the district website administrator, for putting the proposed 2022 budget presentation together and for collaborating with district Administrative Assistant Stacey Popovich. He also thanked the executive staff and the program managers, and he said, “They all did their due diligence making their budget requests” and “Popovich has been a ‘real trouper’ going above and beyond the call of duty to obtain information and manage the spreadsheets from home.”

Gunderman opened the public hearing on the proposed 2022 budget.

Powell said that the public hearing was duly published as required by law, and the board did not receive any public comments before the public hearing.

Gunderman, hearing no public comments, closed the public hearing.

The board approved and adopted the 2022 joint fiscal year budgets for the district and the subdistrict, 4-0. The 2022 approved budget can be viewed at [www.wescottfire.org](http://www.wescottfire.org).

The board also adopted and approved, 4-0, the following:

- The 2022 pay scale, that includes a 4 percent inflation adjustment.
- The services of Peak Consulting Services Inc. for plan reviews and inspections, and the corresponding fee schedule to include a 10 percent administrative fee to be retained as additional revenue by

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the district for each plan review and inspection.

Board recess/relocate

The board made a motion to recess the meeting at 4:59 p.m. and relocate at TLMFPD Administrative Offices, to sign the Intergovernmental Agreement to Provide Operational and Administrative Services with Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District. The meeting resumed at 6 p.m. See TLMFPD/DWFPD article on page 1.

The board adjourned at around 6:35 p.m.

Special meeting Dec. 15  
Chief's report

Jones said the following:

- Kovacs has prepared questions and answers regarding the unification that are available at: [www.wescottfire.org](http://www.wescottfire.org) and [www.tlmfire.org](http://www.tlmfire.org). The website will be updated throughout the process of the unification.
- The three Wescott battalion chiefs have joined the TLMFPD Operations

Team, and Popovich is included in the TLMFPD Administration Team.

- Some staff from both districts will attend West Metro Fire Academy, Denver, on Feb. 1.
- The district offices have relocated to the TLMFPD administration offices, and the vacated offices will become crew member shift accommodations.

**Note:** The mailing address for Donald Wescott Fire Protection District has changed and is now: 16055 Old Forest Point, No. 102, Monument, CO 80132.

Jones said the Wescott board may want to consider relocating board meetings in the future to TLMFPD Station 1 or the administration office board room.

Bradley said the following:

- In January, Wescott Station 1 will need to accommodate six personnel, and the training/meeting room may need to

be utilized as temporary housing for crews as the offices are converted into individual rooms to provide privacy for each shift member.

- Beginning Jan. 11 through mid-May, the crews will integrate, and staff will move around on a monthly roster to allow familiarization with each station, the equipment, and the new district boundaries.

Acting fire chief—  
Wescott

Jones requested the board provide authorization for him to appoint an acting fire chief of his choosing for 10 days from Dec. 21-31, to bridge the gap until Kovacs becomes chief.

The board approved the request to establish an acting chief, 3-0.

Self-Contained Breathing  
Apparatus purchase

Jones said the existing Scott Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) units, although

relatively new and about 5-6 years old, are not compatible with the new TLMFPD Scott SCBA, and he requested the board consider the following:

- The purchase of six compatible sets from the 2021 budget reserves for \$68,779 will avoid a new year price increase.
- Declare up to 20 existing older SCBA sets and the Engine 512 as surplus property (the 2011 Rosenbauer pumper engine is 10 years old with 60,000 miles on the odometer and still marketable either through a buyer or broker).
- The future purchase of new SCBA would be made through an Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG), and the sale of Engine 512 and up to 20 SCBA sets.

Bradley responded to Secretary Larry Schwarz's questions and said the following:

- In 2018 the Scott brand upgraded several things and the current Wescott

SCBA are under the 2013 National Firefighter Protection Association cycle.

- For the first time in about 28 years, Scott has changed the mask and the regulators to be compatible across manufacturers, and the valves are no longer compatible with the Wescott older models.
- It could be catastrophic if the wrong pack were connected to the wrong tank and high air pressure leaked from its seals.
- Each Wescott member will get their own mask, pack, cylinder tank, and a spare.

The board approved the immediate purchase of six new SCBA units, and the sale of the surplus apparatus and the older SCBA equipment, 3-0.

Bradley recognized Lt. Matt Gibbs for submitting an AFG in the short time frame of only a week. The grant process usually takes several months, and if received the grant will assist in the purchase of future SCBA.

Bonus system

Jones confirmed the following:

- At the direction of the board, a bonus system for the staff has been developed, and each staff member has been notified by letter of the bonus payments.
- The bonus pay is an addition to the base pay and taxable income and will make up the difference between the DWFPD pay and the TLMFPD pay at each level.
- The bonus will be paid out in 26 equal payments throughout the year, but it will not count toward their FPPA plans.

Closing comments

Gunderman thanked Jones for "hitting the ground running" and for guiding the Wescott board through "uncharted territory." He said, "If it were not for your experience and leadership, we would not be [sitting] here with Kovacs and Bradley, and I took comfort knowing you were leading the charge for us."

Jones said, "It has been a pleasure being here and a gratifying professional and personal experience" and "our citizens will have better lives for the services we provide in this merger, and the employees by extension of that."

The special meeting adjourned at 4:24 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

Correction

In the December edition of OCN, the board meeting date was incorrect in the DWFPD article and the Calendar of Events due to a change that occurred after the Nov. 18 board meeting. The board decided to change the Dec. 2 board meeting to Dec. 8 and did not inform OCN of the date change. OCN regrets any inconvenience caused by the error.

\*\*\*\*\*

Meetings are usually held on the third Tuesday of every



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month at Station 1, 15415 Gle-neagle Dr., at 7 p.m. Due to COVID-19 distancing proto-

cols, meetings are held virtually for public attendees. The next regular board meeting is

scheduled for Jan. 18 at 4 p.m. For updates, virtual meeting joining instructions, agendas,

and archived minutes, visit [www.wescottfire.org](http://www.wescottfire.org) or call Administrative Assistant Sta-

cey Popovich at 719-488-8680. *Natalie Barszcz can be reached at [nataliebarszcz@ocn.me](mailto:nataliebarszcz@ocn.me).*

### Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District, Dec. 8

## Director remembered; 2022 budget adopted

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District (BF-FRPD) meeting on Dec. 8, the board held a tribute for a director who recently passed. The board also adopted and approved the 2022 budget, and multiple resolutions and schedules, before receiving several updates.

Director Jim Abendschan was excused.

Vice Chairman Nate Dowden was excused from the meeting at 7:22 p.m.

**Tribute to board member**  
Chairman Rick Nearhoof said, "It is with a heavy heart that I announce the passing of Director David Hoffpauir who passed away suddenly on Nov. 23." "David was down to earth and always willing to help, and I will miss him," said Nearhoof. Vice Chairman Nate Dowden and Treasurer Jack Hinton also offered their deepest sympathy during the tribute.

Nearhoof welcomed Deb Hoffpauir as a non-voting honorary board director, to take the place of her late husband for the duration of the meeting.

Fire Chief PJ Langmaid said, "His work here speaks volumes to his contribution to the community, and he will be missed."

### 2022 budget adoption

The board approved and adopted the 2022 budget as presented and the certification of the mill levies, 3-0. The 2022 budget and the mill levy can be viewed at [www.bffire.org](http://www.bffire.org).

Dowden made a motion for the budget form to be emailed to Abendschan for signing and then scanned and returned via fax to Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn.

The board approved the motion, 3-0.

The board also adopted the following:

- The wage and leave accrual schedule.
- A fee schedule.
- The Board of Directors meeting schedule.

The board approved the schedules as presented, 3-0.

Dowden asked if the last meeting on Dec. 14, 2022, would allow enough time to submit all the paperwork to the El Paso County officials.

Board Secretary Donna Arkowski said any meeting date can be changed, if necessary, anytime throughout the year and the county requires the mill levy certification on Dec. 15.

Langmaid said all the approved schedules including the mill levies will be sent to the El Paso County officials on Dec. 9.

### 2021 audit engagement

Hinton recommended the board adopt and engage Dawn Schilling of Schilling & Co. Inc. to conduct the 2021 audit and

said, "Schilling does a great job."

The board approved the engagement letter, 3-0.

### Board of Directors' election—May 2022

The board approved the May 2022 Board of Directors' election, and Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn was approved as the designated election official, 3-0.

**Note:** A vacancy exists on the Board of Directors and may be temporarily filled at the January board meeting. The May board election will include three board director positions.

### Property for inclusion

The board approved a resolution to include 6665 Walker Road, Colorado Springs, into BFFRPD for fire protection and EMS services, 3-0.

Hinton said any property owners that request inclusion into BFFRPD should accept the fees or not join the district, and he asked Langmaid why the board should consider lowering the inclusion fees.

Langmaid recommended the board discuss the matter in executive session with legal counsel. See [www.ocn.me/v21n12.htm#bffirpd](http://www.ocn.me/v21n12.htm#bffirpd).

### Financial report

Hinton said the district has \$2.25 million in the bank and that includes the reserve funds and the money to be transferred by the end of the year.

The district may receive a small amount of tax revenues, and the final annual report will be received on Dec. 10 from the El Paso County assessor.

The board accepted the financial report as presented, 3-0.

### Finance and administration update

Langmaid said the district received the following notable revenues:

- Ambulance revenue of \$9,663.
- Wildland Deployment revenue of \$127,240.
- Tax revenue will be determined later in the month.

Langmaid said a spending freeze in November significantly reduced spending to the bare minimum operating expenses, and the following notable expenses were:

- Tuition expenses for training spots in 2022 for \$5,400.
- The Annual Pikes Peak Radio Communications Network expense of \$10,724.
- A transfer of \$42,403 into the TABOR fund.
- A transfer of \$175,000 into the Capital Improvement Fund.

Langmaid said the district had received 10 pairs of Wildland Duty Boots, 18 Wildland Pull-over Shirts and 12 Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus

bottles.

### Countywide station alerting

Langmaid said the countywide station alerting option is finally under review, thanks to Fire Chief Andrew York of the Cimarron Hills Fire Department taking the lead on the project for the county.

### Chief's report

Langmaid said the chief's report would now be in a new format based on feedback. It is hard to fit everything into one page, and it will require some final tweaking. He added:

- During November, the district responded to 14 fire calls and 49 EMS calls.
- Some of the approved repair projects at Station 2 will likely break ground in December.
- Deputy Chief James Rebitski continues work on the district community risk analysis.
- The strategic wildland

preplan maps are being developed and are estimated to arrive in early 2022. The preplan maps will be followed with tactical maps.

- Supply chain issues are causing delays, but the district is maintaining several months of supplies for operations.

### Personnel update

Langmaid said the district has eight new staff and each shift will be manned with eight staff or a minimum of six staff per shift. Overtime has been higher due to the fire academy for the new recruits, and a firefighter has deployed overseas for 14 months in support of the National Defense Strategy. Another staff member was out of service most of November due to COVID-19.

### Training update

Langmaid said:

- The district completed 2,870 training hours in November, and the total

includes the fire academy for the eight new hires.

- The entire number of training hours completed in 2018 was 500 hours and based on feedback, the staff prefer to be training.
- The district hosted a live fire training day in November for the Colorado

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Springs Fire Department Recruit Academy, for about 30 firefighters.

- District Training Officer Capt. Chris Piepenburg made improvements to the live fire training building and repaired the broken overhead door on the barn.

**Fleet update**

Langmaid said district mechanic Gavin Smith has made multiple repairs to several vehicles. A Type 6 requires new brakes, a tender requires a new primer pump, and both are out of service. The meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

Meetings are usually held on the third Wednesday of every month at Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. Meetings are open to the public via Zoom until further notice. The next regular meeting is scheduled on

Jan. 19 at 7 p.m. For joining instructions, updates, agendas, and minutes, visit [www.bffire.org](http://www.bffire.org) or contact the Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn at [admin@bffire.org](mailto:admin@bffire.org) or call 719-495-4300. *Natalie Barszcz can be reached at [nataliebarszcz@ocn.me](mailto:nataliebarszcz@ocn.me).*

**MA (Cont. from 1)**

an hour and a half, finally leaving after depositing signs with messages to the board including “Listen to Our Teachers,” “Something’s Not Right,” “Leaders Don’t Just Leave,” and “Talk to the Teachers Not the COO.”

The board reconvened after nearly six hours to adjourn, taking no action.

**Large audience attends meeting to address leadership concerns**

On Dec. 9, nearly 100 people attended the regular MA board meeting, which was moved to the East Campus gym to accommodate the crowd. The board voted to post the meeting recording on a one-time basis on the MA YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/I9J92-YNgsU> to remain available for 30 days.

Miller said many in the community have discussed online a staff issue from last summer. He said that a serious Title 9 investigation concerning the assistant

principal/athletic director position was initiated by the prior chief operating officer (COO), which compelled the school to act. The resulting recommendations were acted on but not initiated by the new COO, Merlin Holmes. He added that Holmes has been in multiple employment scenarios, which can be an issue of interest and concern. He said that to his knowledge Holmes never left a position due to interpersonal behavior involving other employees in any sort of direct matter. Lastly, he admonished parents to speak from the heart but speak from truth they were personally aware of rather than what they saw online.

A teacher spoke next, saying that a recent faculty meeting had disturbed a lot of people, but she had some positive suggestions. She advised leadership to focus on improving the climate and culture at both campuses. She said little things would help, like social gatherings offsite, more jeans

days, having administration step in and give teachers a 20-minute break, and celebrating birthdays again. She also suggested mental health days, perhaps using leftover snow days. She asked for an anonymous grievance process such as a locked mailbox for the board that the administration cannot access, saying she would never participate in a survey with her email attached. Finally, she asked that teachers be treated more professionally and that they be evaluated not only in the classroom but for all that they do outside of teaching.

Several parents spoke, thanking the board for all they do but saying that staff is hurting and have no public voice because their careers are on the line. A parent said the board has heard that the new COO is increasing work hours, bullying behind closed doors, cutting budgets, and more. They encouraged the board to reach out privately to teachers and staff, bypassing the COO. A parent read the names of nine staff

members who had recently left Monument Academy: Julie Seymour, Carol Skinner, Marty Venticinque, Eric Rocciola, Chandy Buckingham, Sharla Davis, Janyse Skalla, Rachel Maring, and Debra Kappel.

Other MA parents spoke of their long time at the school and previous challenges MA has faced. They expressed concern that new staff and long-term substitutes do not measure up to MA's high standards. A parent suggested they might consider leaving the school, which would pose a problem for MA's bond refinancing effort. They felt that MA's mission was not being fulfilled and that their children were bored and not learning. They felt teachers could not teach well if they were not supported and that emphasis on character fell off at the middle school level when kids need it the most.

Parents said that MA needs more kids to get more money so they can expand but has traded quality for quantity. One parent said they appreciated Miller's statement about online gossip, but at the same time gossip and rumors are sometimes born in truth or reality. They urged the board to consider their policies and investigate teacher treatment. A final speaker said that last year was difficult but nothing like this year. She said, “There is an enemy attacking this school and he can’t have this school, this is our school.” She said that the climate has changed and that she has heard directly that teachers are not being heard and are scared to speak up, and that is why they are leaving. She urged the board to listen to teachers.

Board member Chris Dole read a statement on behalf of the board. He thanked the six people who spoke, saying it took courage, honesty, and strength. The board, he said, came into the meeting focused on three things: the COO as the leader of MA, the departure of nine staff members, and the stability and viability of the institution. People are angry, tired, concerned, frustrated, and fearful, he said, but this has been building over several years. MA has dealt with a facility expansion, the pandemic, firings, loss of life, and three top leadership changes. He agreed that MA has drifted off course. He said that the board shared every concern they heard, and that they too are parents who want success, academic challenge, accountability, and discipline. But, he said, the board would be wrong to point to Holmes as the only reason.

Dole reviewed the three leaders over the last 2 1/2 years: an executive director who created an atmosphere of distrust, a COO with health issues leading her to resign, and finally Holmes. The MA board, over this time, has been tasked with establishing trust and transparency, acting with deliberation in soliciting input on the secondary school and hiring two COOs and principals to round out the organization chart at both campuses.

However, they sadly lost their principal at the West Campus and decided not to replace him which, in hindsight, was a mistake, Dole said. The board was still trying to understand Seymour's resignation as East Campus principal. He said MA had been a well-oiled machine with one campus, but opening the new campus created a distance that exposed weaknesses in leadership. The leadership at each campus comes from



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the principals, not the COO who drives the overall vision, he said.

Dole said MA must acknowledge there have been multiple pain points, not just issues with five months of leadership, from communication to lack of structural accountability and to discipline for students and staff. He talked about getting back on track very quickly. Communication needs to be key, he said, and fear of reaching out must stop. Completing the organization chart is a must, and the board will issue directives to Holmes to do so and will stop the practice of asking people to wear multiple hats. The board recognizes this structural component will take money and is willing to authorize the funds. He asked the audience to remember the challenges MA has overcome and the prospect of breaking ground next year on an expanded facility.

Holmes acknowledged the frustration directed at him. He said he believes in continuous improvement for students, staff, and himself and would work to improve. For those who have been offended, he apologized for not doing better. He said he was open to criticism and gave staff and parents permission to come and talk to him, at a scheduled time, preferring to hear directly rather than through social media. Holmes said MA would create opportunities for parents to get to know new administrators in different formats. He closed by saying that being student-focused and providing a great education to kids is paramount to MA's success.

Graham delivered his own statement, saying to the MA community and staff that they had made their voices heard and thanking them for their passionate pursuit of the truth. He said the board understood the urgency to fix the issues but that it would take time. He shared the perspective of a student with their permission:

The student said the work ethic was not strong enough and that

teachers make excuses and allow extensions, which does not prepare students for life. High school students are mixed with and treated like middle-schoolers and given little responsibility, which limits growth. If given responsibilities, they believe high school students would step up. Expectations have been dropped drastically and character-first is not enforced, so students don't behave. Teachers don't know how to deal with issues blaming them on being a new school. There used to be a high bar which set MA students apart, but the amount of drama and gossip is unlike anything previously experienced. For these reasons, they don't think the school is for them anymore.

Graham said the board is there to help, adding if MA doesn't correct the course it will not have a high school in the years to come. He spoke of the financial situation based on the current bonds and the need to expand capacity and add athletic facilities. Holmes was brought on to be COO but was thrust into other roles, and his communication style has caused issues. The board members, he said, have put their family, business, and personal lives on hold as they work on these issues and are here to say that failure is not an option. Graham recommended, in addition to the hiring directives, that the board hire an executive coach to delve into leadership, communication, culture, climate, and collaboration issues.

After a lengthy discussion on what that would entail, the board unanimously agreed to do so and to allocate up to \$10,000 and form a subcommittee led by board members Joe Buczkowski and Misty McCuen to spearhead this effort. Graham also asked the Governance Committee to review policy 1518A on grievance and create a new policy on regular communications from principals to



Above: Teachers Anna Vroom, left, and Kendra Kuhlman were spotlighted by MA board member Misty McCuen for their work in and outside of the classroom. Photos by Jackie Burhans.

the MA community.

Highlights

- McCuen spotlighted Anna Vroom, elementary PE teacher, and Kendra Kuhlman, enrichment teacher, for their contributions in and outside of the classroom.
- Holmes and Athletic Director Chris Hale met with the Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA), the high school activities governing body, to discuss the two-year extended process to join.
- Graham said the Governance Committee would do a first-ever review of the staff handbook policies in the spring.

- Brocklehurst reported that, working with the COO, they had greatly reduced next year's expected \$700,000 deficit. He was not prepared to share details but reassured the board that it did not involve a reduction of staff.
- The board did a first read of its new board election policy.

\*\*\*\*\*

The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 13 at 6 p.m. at the East Campus band room in person only. The MA School Board usually meets at 6 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. For more information, see <https://bit.ly/ma-boe>.

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

Lewis-Palmer D 38 Board of Education, Dec. 13

Communications program, demographic study, open enrollment policy discussed

By Harriet Halbig

The Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education discussed the implementation of priority 5—building strong relationships through effective communication—received an updated demographic analysis of the district, and considered new policies on open enrollment during its Dec. 13 meeting.

Communication discussion

Director of Communications Mark Belcher reported on plans to modernize the district's brand through redesign of the district logo, initiating a marketing push in January via digital communication, redesigning of the district website to feature the five priorities of the strategic plan, and initiating the creation of a monthly newsletter about Board of Education activity.

Current assets include a new storytelling platform, social media outlets, and the website.

The marketing push addresses four key groups: district students, parents, staff, and the community. Print ads featuring the theme "D38 elevates" will appear in local publications. Stress will be placed on the messages that the district supplies a world-class education and serves every student every day.

The new logo will be introduced immediately on the website and signs

will be replaced at all locations over the coming year.

When asked about plans to cut back on print ads, Belcher responded that the district plans to limit investment in ads in relocation publications and instead concentrate on ads directed toward the local population. The effectiveness of the new approach can be determined by enroll-



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ment and the support of voters in the event of a mill levy override ballot initiative.

The Portrait of the Lewis-Palmer Graduate initiative now in development will demonstrate how the district’s curriculum and programs lead to future success of its graduates.

Superintendent KC Somers commented that the district recognizes that it’s in a competitive landscape in relation to neighboring districts and that he hopes to hear from students and staff about being part of a world-class organization. He said the board, during its recent work session, stressed the concept of listening to students, parents, staff, and the community.

In November, members of the district leadership visited each school to observe classes in session and speak with students and staff. These visits will continue.

**Demographic update**  
Shannon Bingham of Western Demographics spoke to the board regarding the state of development in the area and its potential impact on the district in the coming years.

Bingham said that the district has lost some enrollment in the last few years due to COVID-19 and the cost of housing, but the birth rate is increasing significantly and

he anticipates there will be a housing building boom in the next five years with attractive prices for families with children. In addition, interest rates are attractive right now. In the Jackson Creek area, it’s anticipated that an additional 350 homes will be built per year for the next five years.

There was a brief discussion of how much the district receives per unit of new construction. District 38 is unusual in that it consists of two towns and unincorporated El Paso County. Bingham said that the average amount received in the state is \$2,000 per unit.

This money can be used to purchase land to build new schools as needed or withdrawn as cash. Bingham stressed that it is important that the district have this funding to draw from.

Somers commented that the district currently receives \$1,300 per unit.

Bingham described the capacity of each school and whether the district could weather the anticipated growth in the area.

Palmer Lake Elementary is short of capacity but it is important that there be a preschool available in the area because young families are showing an interest in the

town. However, the rate of building in the area is slow, Bingham said.

Bear Creek Elementary will exceed its capacity due to the rate of building in the Jackson Creek corridor. Ray Kilmer Elementary will be all right for the next few years with the possible addition of a modular classroom.

The middle school and high schools are all right for now, Bingham said, but as more younger children mature there will be pressure.

Bingham also stated that many of the students at the new Monument Academy secondary school are coming from other districts.

**Open enrollment policy**  
The board discussed a change in its open enrollment policy by having a first reading of two existing policies and their updates.

The open enrollment process will now be divided into two phases, one stretching from Jan. 1 through mid-February and the other beginning shortly thereafter. As in the past, preference will be given to students who live in the district and want to attend a school other than their neighborhood school, students from outside the district who have siblings attending D38 schools, and children of dis-

trict staff.

Acceptance is contingent on space available in the requested school.

A detailed description of the procedure for incoming military families is included in the policies.

**Superintendent’s update**  
Somers reported that analysis of the recent student survey is underway, and a report will come in January.

In response to the need for additional mental health support, a new state initiative called “I Matter” offers three free appointments with a counselor. Seven hundred appointments have been made to take advantage of the program.

The new Financial Advisory Committee has been selected. The 14 members will have their first meeting in January.

The district has been selected to receive a new curriculum and training for literacy up to grade 5.

Fifty members of the district’s DECA team have advanced to the state level, and members of the Lewis-Palmer Wind Symphony have been selected to perform for the Colorado Music Educators Association. In addition, six members of the Palmer Ridge High School choir will be in the state choir and five members

will be in the all-city band.

The board recognized American Furniture Warehouse for its support of the district through its school partnership program. The organization has donated over \$21,000 over the past years.

**Citizens’ comments**  
Three members of the public spoke against the No Place for Hate program featured during last month’s board meeting. One objected to the fact that the program creates victim and oppressor mentalities and that it requires participating schools to report any incidents of bias.

Another individual objected that schools are required to reapply for membership in the program each year, that program sponsors (the Anti-Defamation League) teach gender fluidity, and that participation gives power to an outside activist group.

\*\*\*\*\*  
The Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education meets at 6 p.m. on the third Monday of each month in the district’s learning center, 146 N. Jefferson St., Monument. Due to the school closure on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the January meeting will be on Jan. 24.

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

## Monument Board of Trustees Special Meeting, Dec. 7

# Board approves 2022 budget

*By Allison Robenstein*  
During a special meeting on Dec. 7, the Monument Board of Trustees approved the 2022 budget.

**2022 budget approved**  
After restating the 2021 budget, the following appropriations were approved for 2022, creating a total operating budget of \$42.498 million:

- General Fund, \$ 7.58 million
- Capital Projects Fund, \$ 3.27 million
- Police 2F Fund, \$4.28 million

- 2A Water ASD Fund, \$ 1.73 million
- Community Development Fund, \$167,410
- Traffic Impact Fee Fund, \$100,000
- Storm Drainage Impact Fee Fund, \$100,000
- Water Enterprise Fund, \$ 25.21 million
- Parks Fee Fund, \$0
- Conservation Trust Fund, \$60,000

Trustee Laurie Clark asked about the police fund, wondering in which fund the money would be placed if

the expected \$1.65 million in revenues is exceeded. Town Manager Mike Foreman said all sales taxes generated by 2F would go into that fund.

Mayor Don Wilson commended Foreman for reaching an unreserved fund balance of 14.13%. His goal has been to maintain a balance of 15%, while before he arrived the reserves were almost zero.

In accordance with statute, the property tax mill levy was certified at 5.75%. In 2021, the mill levy was 6.15%

### Agreement to join Colorado opioid settlement

Madeline VanDenHoek, assistant to the town manager/strategic initiatives, asked the board to approve an opioid settlement memorandum of understanding (MOU). Recent settlements with Purdue Pharma, McKinsey & Co., Johnson & Johnson, AmerisourceBergen, Cardinal Health, and McKesson resulted “in up to approximately \$400 million in settlement funds for both the state and Colorado local governments to abate the opioid crisis.”

If 95% of all Colorado counties and municipalities participate, then legal claims may be made. The money would go to the Police Department.

Chief Sean Hemingway said he could use the settlement money for training officers in overdose response, identifying medical emergencies faster, and replenishing the town’s supply of Narcan.

Trustee Darcy Schoening asked the chief to ensure the town follows any specific mandates for spending the money within the MOU.

Trustee Ron Stephens asked if the town police have seen opioid issues here. Hemingway said there have been overdoses and situations in which officers had to administer Norcan, but it isn’t always evident on what substance the subject is overdosing.

During public comments, resident Nancy Swearingen said she found it interesting that the board would approve this funding but disapproves of funding that doesn’t match their interests. “I expect more from each and every one of you,” she said.

The board approved the request unanimously.

### Workshop to discuss possible future resolutions

Before the special meeting, the entire board met in person to discuss two resolutions related to COVID-19 vaccination mandates and passport requirements. In general, the board agreed to remove any mention of the current pandemic virus. Rather, they suggested the resolution should be broader. Clark said there may be a lot of viruses coming in the future with specific names. She asked that the resolutions emphasize individual health choices overall. She suggested more general verbiage such as, “all mandatory health orders that violate our constitutional rights.”

Although both resolutions state, “the COVID vaccine only has Emergency Use Authorization approval from the FDA,” several board members noted the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine received full approval by the FDA on Aug. 23, 2021. It’s a moot point if any mention of COVID-19 is removed.

One of the two resolutions asks for sanctuary status for the town, but Stephens is against such action. He said the board cannot combat lawlessness with more lawlessness because it results in anarchy. He suggested such a move would be following the communist playbook, which would instill martial law to combat government-created anarchy. Mayor Pro Tem Kelly Elliott was also averse to labeling the town a sanctuary. Schoening disagreed, saying she might still consider some type of sanctuary status, asking for legal advice on the meaning of the word sanctuary. She asked whether it truly equates to an anarchic state. In her research, she found the word simply suggests “We won’t cooperate with the federal government on certain issues.”

The board decided to have another workshop to continue discussing these resolutions before the next scheduled meeting on Jan. 3 at 5:30 p.m.

The board went into executive session to receive legal advice on the inclusion of the Monument Ice Rinks property at 16240 Old Denver Road into the Triview Metropolitan District. Upon entering back into

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open session, the board unanimously approved water rights for the property, directing town staff and Foreman to further negotiate those rights.  
\*\*\*\*\*

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 5:30 p.m. Jan. 3. Call 719-884-8014 or see [www.townofmonument.org](http://www.townofmonument.org) for information. To see upcoming agendas and complete board packets for BOT or to download audio recordings of past

meetings, see <http://monumenttown-co.minutesondemand.com> and click on Board of Trustees.  
*Allison Robenstein can be reached at [allisonrobenstein@ocn.me](mailto:allisonrobenstein@ocn.me).*

Monument Planning Commission Public Hearing and Work Session, Dec. 8

Triview and church enclave annexations approved; maximum building height discussed

By Kate Pangelinan

The Dec. 8 meeting of the Monument Planning Commission (MPC) featured a Public Hearing, during which the MPC voted to approve recommendation of proposals described in the meeting agenda as “Enclave Annexation and Zoning of an Area Known as Triview Metropolitan District parcels on St. Lawrence Way” and “Enclave Annexation and Zoning of an Area Known as Trinity Lutheran Church.” Then, the meeting segued into a Work Session. The MPC discussed potential futures for the maximum building height in Monument and other topics.

Work Sessions do not involve voting on specific planning items. This particular series of Work Sessions is intended to gather information on the MPC’s hopes and perspectives to relay to the Board of Trustees (BOT).

Commissioners present at the meeting were Martin Trujillo, Cathy Green, and Daniel Ours, along with Chairman Chris Wilhelmi and Vice Chairman Sean White.

Public Hearing

Here are some facts about the proposals, according to a presentation by Planner II Debbie Flynn along with the meeting packet available online:

- These annexation and zoning proposals were for two parcels of land belonging to the TVMD (1 acre and 14,513 square feet), as well as the property belonging to Trinity Lutheran Church (5 acres).
- The two parcels of land belonging to TVMD are located on St. Lawrence Way. These parcels contain the district’s tank site. Trinity Lutheran Church is located at 17750 Knollwood Drive.
- The proposed zoning for the properties on St. Lawrence Way is “P,” or “Public,” and the proposed zoning for Trinity Lutheran Church is “LLR,” or “Large Lot Residential.”
- These land parcels are surrounded

by the town of Monument, making them “enclaves.” The town was the applicant for these proposals.

- Annexing these land parcels into the town is intended to provide them with future security and services. “Police and road maintenance services” were mentioned in Flynn’s presentation.
- Motions to recommend the proposals to the Monument Board of Trustees (BOT) were approved unanimously, 5-0.

Work Session

- During the Work Session, the MPC picked up on prior discussions about the maximum allowable building height, among other topics. The goal of these current Work Sessions is to present findings to the BOT, showing where the PC stands on various issues, and seeing what the BOT would like to pursue further.
- Currently, the highest allowable building height in Monument is 75 feet. The question has been raised as to whether this could be lowered to 50 feet. Many factors are involved in this discussion, including:
  1. Required setbacks for buildings, concerning how far buildings of various heights have to be from I-25 and Jackson Creek Parkway.
  2. How “skinny” a 75-foot building would turn out, built within Monument’s parameters. It was suggested that it may be too “onerous” for developers to even consider building such a thing. Commissioner Green described a building like this as a tower surrounded by parking lots. Some commissioners said that even if developers are unlikely to build a 75-foot building, they would still prefer to remove the possibility from the town code entirely. It was suggested that if the town changes

so that it would better accommodate 75-foot buildings in the future, the option could be added back in with more specificity.

3. Developers contacting the town about building height. The Planning Department has heard from some developers that while they aren’t planning to build to 75 feet, they would prefer not to have the possibility removed. Previously, they had the option of building to 90 feet, and 75 feet was seen as a compromise. With this in mind, some members of the MPC wondered if any conflict that might follow lowering the maximum building height in areas where there probably won’t be 75-foot buildings anyway would be worth it. Even without changes to the code, all buildings may turn out under 75 feet as it stands.
4. Whether it would be, as Green suggested, “bad practice” to retain the possibility of a 75-foot building in the town code if it’s not what’s wanted/practical/in line with the rest of the town. This could be misleading.

Planning Director Meggan Herington asked the MPC some questions regarding how a maximum height of 75 feet got in the town code to begin with, and what sort of updates the MPC received during the recent code overhaul. This generated some discussion, including points such as:

1. It was stated that when the 75-foot building height was agreed upon, members of the MPC were given to understand that 75 feet was the lowest compromise available, reducing the maximum building height from 90 feet.
2. Some MPC members do not feel that they were very involved in the code rewrite. They were briefed a couple times, but many factors were involved, including the COVID-19 pandemic and processes becoming remote.
3. Herington was thanked for getting the MPC more information. She was also later thanked for listening to the MPC’s concerns and observations.
4. It was suggested that more progress might be made toward objectives now than in the future.

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- After conversations with the public, Herington thought it would be helpful to highlight the difference between the Comprehensive Plan and the town’s code. The Comprehensive Plan paints a picture of the community’s desires for the area, helping to guide decision-making. The code, on the other hand, is full of concrete rules concerning what is allowed and how things should be built. These are two different documents, with different kinds of power.
  - Another point of discussion concerned the characteristics of Light Industrial use. A goal is to establish what the MPC doesn’t like about industrial use in Monument, and then to figure out how
- to ward against it using available tools. As Herington understood it, the current conversation about industrial development began because of public response to a submittal for a property along Old Denver Road. She suggested that it is likely the MPC will see a new version of that property’s Preliminary Plan in February, as one has since been submitted in reaction to negative citizen reception and is under review. All projects currently being developed by the town of Monument can be found here: <http://www.townofmonument.org/235/Development-Projects>, including a Preliminary PUD for Conexus Phases 2 and 3 submitted on Nov. 19.
- Five or six detailed definitions of types of distribution centers and/or warehouses were requested by members of the PC. Attempts will be made to clarify and pursue desires for Monument.
  - Some of the topics mentioned during Public Comment for Non-Agenda Town Planning Items included respect expressed for Herington and advice regarding distribution centers.

Information and relevant links

  - The town’s planning staff posts explanatory packets, agendas, and meeting minutes on this website: [monumenttownco.documents-on-demand.com](http://monumenttownco.documents-on-demand.com).
  - Many MPC meetings are available to watch in their entirety on the
- town’s YouTube page, at [youtube.com/channel/UCdFLo8UcqZfFdkio5jT6GDA](https://youtube.com/channel/UCdFLo8UcqZfFdkio5jT6GDA). People may find it easier to search for “Town of Monument” or “Monument Planning Commission” in YouTube’s search bar. The Dec. 8 meeting is not currently available to watch in this way.

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

\*\*\*\*\*

The next MPC meeting is expected to be held on Jan. 12 at 6 p.m. in the Monument Town Hall.

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

Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, Dec. 9

Policy on short-term rentals approved

*By James Howald and Jackie Burhans*

The Palmer Lake Board of Trustees met once in December, on Dec. 9. At its final meeting of the year, the board concluded its work on a policy governing short-term rentals (STRs). The board also voted on its 2022 budget and considered a request to rezone a property.

An ordinance to grant Black Hills Energy a franchise agreement to provide the town with natural gas got its first reading. The board heard a request to give Fletcher Drilling more time to vacate its current location. The board considered a request from the Monument Police Department (MPD) to use the Elephant Rock property for training. Finally, the board heard operational reports.

**STRs to be licensed and capped**

In response to the increasing numbers of STRs in the town, the board began discussing how to regulate them at a workshop session in July. Trustee Karen Stuth took the lead in researching the ordinances written by comparable towns, with Leadville often serving as a policy template.

At the Dec. 9 meeting, the board reviewed Ordinance 12-2021, which is the result of months of discussion by the board. The ordinance defines an STR as a rental for less than 30 days and defines two types: Class 1, which are owner-occupied, and Class 2, which are not owner-occupied. Both types of STRs must be licensed by the town of Palmer Lake; STR licenses are granted only to STRs and are different from the business license required for other types of businesses. If an STR has more than three complaints, the town may hold a hearing at which the STR license may be suspended or revoked.

In previous discussions, several of the trustees—Stuth and Trustee Darin Dawson in particular—said they did not want to see too many STRs in the town owned by investors who did not live on the properties, as an excess of such properties might drive up housing prices and make it difficult for the employees of local businesses to live in the town. The ordinance caps the number of non-owner-occupied STRs at 112, which is 10 percent of the residential structures in the town. The ordinance does not cap the number of owner-occupied STRs.

The board voted unanimously to approve the ordinance, which will take effect this month.

Ordinance 12-2021 is posted on the town’s website here: [https://www.townofpalmerlake.com/sites/default/files/fileattachments/ordinance/7092/ord\\_12-2021\\_creating\\_short\\_term\\_rental.pdf](https://www.townofpalmerlake.com/sites/default/files/fileattachments/ordinance/7092/ord_12-2021_creating_short_term_rental.pdf).

**Board approves 2022 budget**

Town Administrator Dawn Collins detailed changes to the proposed 2022 budget made by town staff since the public hearing on the budget held at the November board meeting. She mentioned more complete and accurate revenue projections, a change to Palmer Lake Police Department salaries prompted by the resignation of a part-time officer, and an increase to the contingency line due to the town not receiving a State Historical Grant for the restoration of the Town Hall.

In a memo to Mayor Bill Bass and the board, Collins pointed out that the proposed budget included a six-month cash reserve for operations and capital expenditures and an average 3 percent cost-of-living increase for employees.

Resolution 55-2021, which summarizes the 2022 budget and appropriates funds as required, was approved by the board on a 4-3 vote. Bass, Trustee Samantha Padgett, Stuth, and Dawson voted in favor; Trustee Nicole Currier, Trustee Jessica Farr, and Trustee Glant Havenar voted no.

**Residential property rezoned**

Bass opened a public hearing on Randy Brenneman’s request to change the zoning of his 7-acre property at the intersection of Red Rocks Ranch Road and Highway 105 from R1 (low-density residential) to RA (residential agricultural). In his request for rezoning, Brenneman said he wanted to build a barn with living quarters on the top floor on his property and raise livestock. The Planning Commission heard no objections from neighbors and approved Brenneman’s request.

There were no comments from the public at the board meeting, and Bass closed the public hearing.

The board voted unanimously in favor of Ordinance 14-2021, which rezones Brenneman’s property as requested.

**Natural gas franchise ordinance gets first reading**

At the Dec. 9 meeting, an ordinance granting Black Hills Energy a franchise, giving the company access to the town’s streets and rights of way for the purpose of delivering natural gas to residents, got its first reading. The franchise will remain in effect for 20 years and says Black Hills Energy will pay 4 percent of its gross receipts to the town.

Havenar raised a concern that Black Hills Energy might want to add light poles as part of its natural gas delivery infrastructure. Town Attorney Matthew Krob said natural gas delivery did not require poles. Bass confirmed poles would not be used.

Bass, Currier, Dawson, Farr and Padgett voted in favor of Ordinance 15-

2021. Havenar voted no.

**Fletcher Drilling granted extension**

At its May 13 meeting, the board granted Fletcher Drilling a six-month conditional use permit allowing the company time to clear its property at 797 S. Highway 105 of drilling rigs and other equipment used by the business. In November, owner Tommy Fletcher went before the Planning Commission to request a six-month extension of the permit. The Planning Commission approved Fletcher’s request, with the stipulations that he report regularly on his progress and be subject to a fine set by the Board of Trustees if the new deadline on May 27, 2022 is missed.

On Dec. 9, the board considered Resolution 54-2021, which confirms the Planning Commission’s extension. Fletcher told the board three rigs had been moved but two were awaiting parts that were delayed due to supply chain issues. Dawson said he felt Fletcher had a plan and should get an extension. Stuth said she did not want the issue to drag on and suggested the extension be reduced from six to two months. Havenar suggested an extension of three months.

The first vote on the resolution failed, with Bass, Dawson and Farr voting in favor and Currier, Havenar, Padgett, and Stuth voting against. Padgett then moved to amend the resolution to give an extension of three months. The amended resolution passed with only Farr voting no.

**Elephant Rock property to be police training site**

Collins told the board MPD had asked to use the Elephant Rock property as a temporary training site for exercises such as building clearing, barricaded suspect drills, open area searches and multi-family scenarios. She said paint-

ball guns would be used for some exercises.

The board approved the request with Farr voting against.

**Highlights of operation reports**

- Collins told the board the concrete for the library ramp should be complete by mid-December, and the Pikes Peak Library District was reviewing the agreement with the town.
- The roof and shingles for the Town Hall are complete and the electrical system is being roughed in.
- Changes have been made to the Master Plan project to reduce its cost.
- Parking kiosks should be in place and staff trained by the end of December.
- Town administrative offices will be closed on Dec. 23 and 24, and on Jan. 1.

The meeting ended with an executive session to discuss the penalty for non-compliance. No action was taken after the session.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Board of Trustees is scheduled to hold one meeting in January, on Jan. 13. See the town’s website at [www.townofpalmerlake.com](http://www.townofpalmerlake.com) to confirm times, dates and locations. While the Town Hall is being repaired, evening meetings will be held at the Palmer Lake Elementary School Library at 115 Upper Glenway and daytime meetings will be held at Tri-Lakes Chamber Community Meeting House at 300 Highway 105. Meeting times may change. Meetings are normally held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. Information: 481-2953.

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

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

Triview Metropolitan District, Dec. 14

Triview to provide Forest Lakes Metro District operator services

*By Jennifer Kaylor*

At the Dec. 14 Triview Metropolitan District Board of Directors meeting, District Manager Jim McGrady reviewed the 2022 budgets for Triview as well as subdistricts A and B and the new year’s water and wastewater rate adjustments for residential and commercial customers. In addition to conducting budget- and rate-related public hearings, the board considered numerous resolutions and agreements,

including an agreement to provide water and wastewater operation, maintenance, and administrative services on behalf of Forest Lakes Metropolitan District (FLMD).

Triview staff, all board directors, and legal representatives attended the meeting either online or in person.

The December board meeting packets, which include the agenda,



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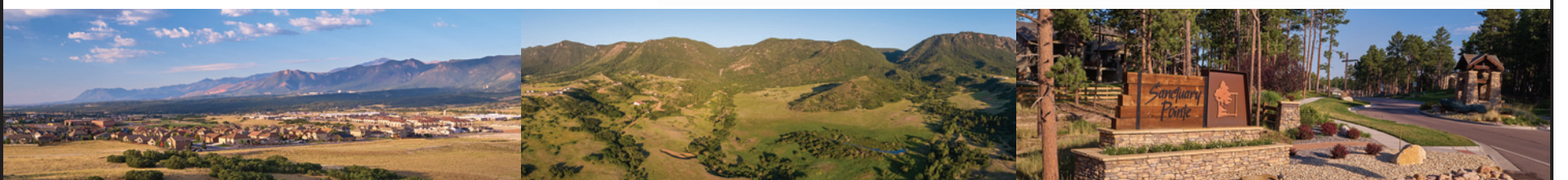


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TRIVIEW (Cont. from 14)

may be accessed via <https://triviewmetro.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Triview-Board-Packet-for-12.14.2021-Part-1.pdf> and <https://triviewmetro.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Triview-Board-Packet-for-12.14.2021-Part-2.pdf>.

Triview is a Title 32 special district in Monument that provides road, park, and open space maintenance, as well as water, stormwater, and wastewater services to Jackson Creek, Promontory Pointe, Sanctuary Pointe, and several commercial areas.

Neighboring district requests support

Among the many action items presented to the directors, McGrady explained the potential agreement between Triview and FLMD. Having received notice from Donala Water and Sanitation District (DWSD)—FLMD’s then-current provider of operator services—that it was no longer in a position to provide its services, FLMD requested that Triview fill the void.

Characterizing the request as a good opportunity, McGrady spoke of the potential for Triview to increase its revenue, provide service to another district without incurring additional costs, and possibly gain operational efficiencies. He described Triview’s current public works personnel as numerically and expertly capable of absorbing the additional responsibilities.

Having received DWSD’s detailed records pertaining to its former service to FLMD, McGrady calculated an annual revenue of \$198,000 to pay for Triview’s staff hours devoted to its potential operator services which he included in Triview’s proposed 2022 budget. Personnel time would be tracked via individual crew member’s day books to assess monthly hours charged and accuracy of the budget estimate. He confirmed that costs of materials, meters, equipment, infrastructure, and other improvements would be borne by FLMD. Ann Nichols, FLMD district manager, would continue in her role and work closely with McGrady to ensure strong communication between the districts and their respective boards.

McGrady commented that FLMD used the same metering system as Triview, so the systems would be highly compatible, plus both districts engaged American Conservation and Billing Solutions (AmCoBi) for billing. AmCoBi would keep separate accounting for the two districts, so Triview would pay both invoices and subsequently bill FLMD according to the AmCoBi invoice. McGrady emphasized the positive relationship that Triview had been developing with FLMD and expressed enthusiasm for the long term. The FLMD Board of Directors had already unanimously approved the agreement, he added.

In response to a director’s question, McGrady commented that the supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) systems—essentially the brains of water and wastewater systems—would not likely be integrated. FLMD would build its own stand-alone system to save the greater expense of attempting to integrate with Triview’s SCADA system.

Water attorney Chris Cummins explained that

the agreement is perpetual but written with “easy-to-get-out terms” requiring a 120-day advance written notice by either party. He described the meetings with FLMD as “really good” and the contract as good and reasonable for the services that Triview would provide.

Directors voiced support for Triview to provide water and wastewater operation, maintenance, and administrative services to FLMD and voted unanimously to authorize board President Mark Melville to sign the agreement.

Fewer mills, expanded capital

Melville opened public hearings on the 2022 budgets for Triview Metropolitan District and Triview sub-districts A and B.

McGrady stated that a rise in property values and growth within the district allowed a mill levy decrease from the 27 mills collected in 2021 to the 24 mills proposed for 2022. The budget reflected that 21.5 mills would be directed toward debt service and 2.5 mills would go toward operations and maintenance; in the November 2020 election, voters approved a measure that allows Triview to direct up to 7 mills of its 35-mill maximum toward operations and maintenance.

One of the capital expenses listed was a second Ventrac 4500 tractor for an estimated \$53,000. McGrady praised the versatility, maneuverability, enclosed cab, and snow-throwing capabilities of this vehicle and deemed it essential for snow removal on the district’s ever-expanding sidewalks. Among other vehicles included as line items, McGrady discussed the possibility of purchasing a vac truck for cleaning sewer lines, an estimated \$180,000. This is currently a contracted annual service for which the district would pay about \$180,000 in 2022. The agreement with FLMD may enable Triview to purchase the vac truck and service wastewater pipelines in both districts.

Two of the more significant anticipated expenses were the segment C installation of the Northern Delivery System (NDS) and south reservoir improvements, budgeted at \$1 million and \$950,000, respectively. In summer 2021, a portion of the NDS—the potential regional drinking water delivery system for northern El Paso County water providers—was installed under I-25, see <https://www.ocn.me/v21n12.htm#tvmd> for more information. Segment C would extend the pipeline from Agate Park, across Home Place Ranch, under the Preble’s meadow jumping mouse habitat, and along the far eastern border of Jackson Creek fillings three through six. Construction of infrastructure at the south reservoir, which is part of the Stonewall Springs Reservoir Complex, would create the final piece of the puzzle to allow the district to move water from the reservoir and put it into the Arkansas River for exchange.

Neither of the Triview sub-districts’ budgets projected any revenue or expenses and thus carried zero balances. After all hearings were closed, directors unanimously approved Resolutions 2021-15, 2021-16, and 2021-17, accepting all budgets.

Residential water rates increase ... mostly

During the public hearing for Triview’s 2022 proposed utility rates and fees, McGrady provided a summary of the 2022 proposed residential rate adjustments. The 2021 tier one rate was \$5.25 per 1,000 gallons up to 6,000 gallons. The 2022 schedule showed a tier one rate of \$6.20 per 1,000 gallons with a tier maximum

of 8,000 gallons. Tier two, beginning at 8,001 gallons, would charge \$9.54 per 1,000 gallons up to 20,000 gallons. Comparing 2021 and 2022 tier rates, McGrady calculated a 10,000 gallon water bill, including base rate and billing charges, to be \$96.50 in 2021. The same volume would cost \$95.00 in 2022, a decrease of 1.55%. This is because of the expanded volume of tier one which allows customers to use more water at the lower per-1,000-gallon cost of tier one, McGrady explained.

A 20,000-gallon comparison revealed a 7.11% increase from \$184.00 in 2021 to \$197.08 in 2022; however, this cost was lower than Donala’s proposed 2022 cost of \$229 for the same volume, he reported. Wastewater costs increased by about 3% primarily to keep pace with inflation and district growth.

The largest commercial rate increase was in the renewable water/transmission fee, which rose from \$9,000 to \$14,402; a necessary increase for supporting capital projects associated with the NDS. Water tap fees remained the same at \$12,040 and sewer tap fees rose slightly to \$7,000.

After the public hearing was closed and the meeting advanced to action items, directors considered and unanimously approved Resolution 2021-14, establishment of 2022 rates and fees for the provision of water and wastewater services for Triview.

Additional actions and reports noted

- Directors authorized McGrady to file an application to change Triview’s Excelsior Ditch Co. shares from Pueblo County land irrigation rights to rights that can be used for municipal purposes. Cummins explained that it had the potential to be an Excelsior Ditch-wide application, but he would hold firmly to a Dec. 31, 2021 deadline.
- McGrady reported that Triview had received its long-term contract at the Pueblo Reservoir as well as a subcontract to use the north outlet works. These contracts are additional pieces of the puzzle that will allow Triview to access its renewable water resources.
- The board approved a 2021 audit proposal from Haynie and Co. not to exceed \$21,600.
- GroundFloor Media substantiated that the district had increased its website traffic by 37% and links pertaining to renewable water and economic development were being accessed regularly.

The district’s public meeting ended at 7:22 p.m. The board entered executive session per Colorado Revised Statute §24-6-402(4)(a),(b),(e), acquisitions, legal advice, and negotiations, regarding the following topics: negotiations associated with water delivery infrastructure, water court filing Bale water rights, and negotiations regarding an intergovernmental agreement with the Town of Monument.

\*\*\*\*\*

Triview board meetings are generally held on the third Thursday of the month. The next meeting is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 20. The district office is located at 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302. Check the district’s website, <https://triviewmetro.com/>, or call 488-6868 for meeting updates. See also “Triview Metropolitan District” on Facebook or [Twitter.com/@TriviewMetro](https://twitter.com/TriviewMetro).

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

Forest Lakes Metropolitan District and Pinon Pines Metropolitan Districts 1, 2, and 3, Dec. 6

Rate increases for residents; 2022 budgets and mill levies adopted

By Natalie Barszcz

The Pinon Pines Metropolitan District (PPMD) 1 board met via teleconference on Dec. 6 to adopt and approve the 2022 budget and set the mill levy. The PPMD 1 meeting was followed by the Forest Lakes Metropolitan District (FLMD) and Pinon Pines Metropolitan Districts 2 and 3 meeting where the board approved rate increases for water, wastewater, and landscape services and a new contract for services, and adopted the 2022 budgets and mill levies for each district. Multiple updates were provided.

PPMD 1 board members are: Board President Mike Hitchcock, Vice President Mike Slavick, Secretary Chris Paulene and Director AJ Slavick. One board vacancy exists on this all-resident board.

FLMD and PPMD 2 and 3 board members are: President George Lenz, executive vice president of finance or Classic Homes; Secretary James Boulton,

vice president/project manager of Classic Homes; Assistant Secretary Joe Loidolt, president of Classic Homes, and Treasurer Doug Stimple, CEO of Classic Homes. One board vacancy exists in all three of these districts.

Ann Nichols is the manager for all four districts. **Note:** FLMD, located west of I-25 at the end of West Baptist Road, is a Title 32 service district in El Paso County established in 1985. FLMD is the half-acre operating district responsible for the public infrastructure and utility and general government services for the residents of PPMD 1 and 2, and the commercial property in PPMD 3. FLMD collects the residential property taxes from PPMD 1 and 2 and receives a public improvement fee from sales taxes collected in PPMD 3. PPMD 1 and 2 are in unincorporated El Paso County, but the commercial section, PPMD 3, is within Monument town limits.





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**Above:** An east-facing view of Bristlecone Lake in the Forest Lakes development on Dec. 20. Canada geese seek refuge on the partially frozen lake. The decline in the level of the lake is evident from the amount of exposed shore line. *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*

Service rate increases

Nichols said the current rates for water, wastewater, landscape maintenance services and development fees continue to “creep up gently” and when the residential development ceases, the rates need to be at a certain level. “The proposed rate increases will get the district closer to where it needs to be,” said Nichols. The service rate increases for PPMD 1 and 2 residents are as follows:

- An increase of 7% for both water and wastewater fees.
- A \$1 increase for the landscaping maintenance from \$13 to \$14 per month.

The board heard no public comments during the public hearing and unanimously approved the rate increases.

Operator services contract

Nichols requested the board approve a new operator services contract with Triview Metropolitan District (TVMD) and said:

- A flat monthly rate of \$75 per labor hour for 220 hours per month would be the cost, for a total of \$198,000 annually.
- The FLMD district engineer agrees that it is an appropriate rate and number of hours, and it will provide a full-time operator at the plant.
- TVMD is cross training with Donala Water and Sanitation District, and FLMD is working through the billing and the meter reading issues.
- FLMD will build its own supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system for the water and wastewater system and will be not integrated with the TVMD system. FLMD budgeted about \$63,000 for the SCADA system.
- The transition to the new contract with TVMD (that includes customer billing by AmCoBi) is expected to be complete by the end of the year except for the SCADA system.

The board unanimously approved the contract as presented.

**Notes:** Donala Water and Sanitation District had provided the plant engineer and residential billing services until Dec. 31. See [www.ocn.me/v21n11.htm#dwsd](http://www.ocn.me/v21n11.htm#dwsd). The operator services contract between FLMD and TVMD was discussed and presented to the TVMD board on Dec. 14. See TVMD article on page 14.

Arapahoe (A1) and Denver wells update

Nichols said the following:

- The A1 well (located at Bristlecone Lake) is still waiting for a particular piece of equipment that has a long lead time for delivery, and once it arrives the well can be completed.
- The Denver well (located at the Falcon Commerce Center) water testing has been completed except for the radium testing, which takes a few additional weeks.
- JDS Hydro will file the test results with the state and then order the equipment.
- The Denver well could be online in April 2022.

Bristlecone Lake levels continue to drop weekly, and unless the region begins receiving moisture soon, it will be a challenging spring/summer next year, even though water conservation is taking place, said Nichols.

Northern Monument Creek Interceptor update

Nichols said the following about the Northern Monument Creek Interceptor (NMCI):

- The participants have all looked at a contract that will pay for the design cost for the NMCI

project in early 2022.

- The district has budgeted \$25,000 for the design cost, but FLMD is a relatively small player.
- The total cost of the actual NMCI is in the \$3 million to \$4 million range, and FLMD will not have to decide on a commitment to the NMCI until the project breaks ground. See [www.ocn.me/v21n9.htm#flmd](http://www.ocn.me/v21n9.htm#flmd).
- A loan would be needed for up to five years to pay off the cost of the district’s portion of the NMCI, and the wastewater rates are already established with Colorado Springs Utilities.
- Analysis shows joining the NMCI would be the cheaper option, and the wastewater facility the district uses will go away.

Pikes Peak Rural Water Authority Reuse Study update

Nichols said the following concerning the Pikes Peak Rural Water Authority Reuse Study:

- Forsgren Associates Inc. is planning to meet before the end of the year to relay the cost to deliver the reuse water to the study participants. See [www.ocn.me/v21n9.htm#flmd](http://www.ocn.me/v21n9.htm#flmd).
- The study has effectively identified the Big Johnson or Calhan Reservoirs for the water reuse return flows, and phase 1 of the study is almost complete.
- FLMD will have a better idea of how much it will cost to receive return water flows back to the district from the JD Philips Water Treatment Plant in Colorado Springs.

Stimple said, “Given the lake levels and how dry we are, the return flows are worth considering.”

“Everybody is in the same boat, and it is imperative the district does not let the return flows go south; they must be recaptured and brought back,” said Nichols.

2022 budget-related items approved

Nichols said there has been very little change from last year, and the mill levies for PPMD 1 and 2 remain the same as last year at 11.133 mills for the general operating service and 31.5 mills for the debt service for a total of 44.531. PPMD 1 will continue to pay down the tax-exempt Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria SA loan.

The boards held public hearings for the proposed 2022 budgets and, hearing no public comments, approved:

- 2022 budgets appropriating funds for FLMD and PPMD 1, 2, and 3.
- 2022 mill levies for PPMD 1 and 2.
- The engagement letter for Hoelting & Co. for the 2021 audit in 2022 for FLMD, PPMD 1 and 2. The engagement letter fees will be \$5,650.
- An audit exemption has been filed for the PPMD 3 2021 audit.
- The 2022 Annual Administrative Resolution.
- The 19th Amendment to the Professional Services Agreement between FLMD and Ann Nichols.
- The 2022 Transparency Notices for all four districts can be viewed at [www.forestlakesmetro-district.com](http://www.forestlakesmetro-district.com).

Nichols said the mill levies will be filed on Dec. 14 with the county assessor.

2021 budget amendment—PPMD 3

Nichols said an amendment was needed for the PPMD 3 2021 budget for the Denver well projects that required more funding. A “fair amount” of money was available in PPMD 3 because of the Public Improvement Fee (PIF) and thank goodness we have the PIF and I did not need to go to the developer, said Nichols. Nichols requested the board approve the amendment to the PPMD 3 2021 budget for the additional admin-

istration fee transfer to FLMD that increased from \$250,000 to \$450,000. Nichols requested board approve the \$200,000 that had already been transferred. The board approved the amended 2021 budget 4-0. Reuse line—PPMD 3

Nichols answered board members’ questions about a line item and said the following:

- TVMD installed an unused 18-inch water reuse line during the development of the Northern Monument Creek Interceptor.
- In 2019, District General Manager James McGrady of TVMD agreed to sell the reuse line to PPMD 3 during the development of the Falcon Commerce Center.
- The reuse line is currently used to deliver potable water to the wastewater treatment plant.
- The line was purchased in two payments for a total of \$245,000.

Election Resolution for 2022

District counsel Russell A Dykstra of Spencer Fane LLP said the board election will be held on May 3, 2022, and the forms and the publishing of the 2022 election will be available in January and end at the end of February for the self-nomination forms. The election will be cancelled the first week of March if no one runs, and then the incumbent directors will be elected by acclamation.

Nichols said the PPMD 1 board will have two three-year term positions open, and one vacancy will be for a one-year term for the director position vacated in early 2021.

The resolution for the 2022 elections was unanimously approved.

**Note:** Vacancies exist on all four boards. No members of the public attended the meetings.

The PPMD 1 meeting adjourned 4:23 p.m., and the FLMD, PPMD 2, and 3 meeting adjourned at 4:49 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

The meetings of FLMD and PPMD 1, 2, and 3 are usually held quarterly or when necessary on the first Monday of the month at 4 p.m. via teleconference due to COVID-19 distancing protocols. Meeting notices are posted on <https://forestlakesmetrodistrict.com/>. For general questions, contact Nichols at 719-327-5810, [anicholsduffy@aol.com](mailto:anicholsduffy@aol.com).

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

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Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility Joint Use Committee, Dec. 14

# Another successful year appreciated

By Lisa Hatfield

The Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility (TLW-WTF) Joint Use Committee (JUC) met on Dec. 14 to review 2021 and plan for 2022.

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

The three-member JUC acts as the board of the facility and consists of one director from each of the three owner districts' boards: PLSD board member Reid Wiecks, JUC president; MSD board Treasurer John Howe, JUC vice president; and WWSD board Secretary/Treasurer William Clewe, JUC secretary/treasurer.

Facility Manager Bill Burks said in 2021, the TL-WWTF treated 471 million gallons of wastewater. The successful year with the plant included 93% phosphorus removal, 83% removal of total inorganic nitrogen, 98% removal of ammonia, 97% removal of total suspended solids. They installed a new UV generator and a new phosphorus monitoring system. "I can't say enough about the people working here. They're making this facility operate successfully," he said. "We're doing what we're supposed to do, exceeding it really."

**Plant manager reports**

MSD Manager Mark Parker said contractor DRC is evaluating which of the MSD collection lines need to be cleaned or repaired this year. WWSD Manager Jessie Shaffer and PLSD Manager Becky Orcutt had nothing new to report.

Burks said he had to do a \$2,148 emergency repair on the power supply of one effluent flow remote transmitter since the last JUC meeting.

Burks also asked the JUC to approve removing and replacing the current unreliable non-potable wa-

ter pressure regulators—that are used to pump water in many parts of the facility—with a different type of pressure regulator system. This would cost \$10,772 for new transmitters and new programming that would enhance remote monitoring capability and be able to remotely notify operators of a leak within the facility any time of day through an existing supervisory control and data acquisition control and management (SCADA) system. The 2021 reserve contingency budget could pay for this upgrade. The cost would be split by thirds between the three owner districts since it's a capital expense over \$5,000. The JUC members voted unanimously to approve Burks' recommendation.

Burks had no anomalous readings to report in October's TLWWTF Discharge Monitoring Report. He said that the facility is easily meeting its limits for the state's nutrient incentive program for total phosphorus removal. See [www.ocn.me/v20n10.htm#tlwfjuc](http://www.ocn.me/v20n10.htm#tlwfjuc).

MSD Environmental Compliance Coordinator Jim Kendrick discussed how members of the state's Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC) had proposed new additional regulatory limits that continue to be "unaffordable, unattainable, and unsustainable" at the Dec. 13 regulation review hearings. He also explained that some additional rules have been proposed by the state's Water Quality Control Division (WQCD) but do not have a legal basis, because the proposed limits for some trace elements of constituents of concern cannot even be detected, much less reliably and accurately measured, with currently available technology. All of these new unattainable limits are now being opposed statewide by the affected Colorado wastewater treatment facilities, he said.

Kendrick also noted that during these Dec. 13 hearings, WQCD supervisory officials had recommended that several wastewater regulations not be

reviewed by the WQCC every three years through 2029. There are and will continue to be substantial budget and staffing shortfalls at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) that are resulting from the bulk of the CDPHE water quality and clean water staffs being shifted to working primarily on the completion of Gov. Polis's new Colorado 10-year Water Conservation Master Plan over the next eight years.

**Animal encounters**

Burks said a big beaver visited the plant, jumped into the phosphorus clarifier, swam through the pipe and into the UV building. Burks contacted the Division of Wildlife, which could not help. Burks then contacted local contractor K2 Kritter Solutions, which provided help but couldn't catch the beaver because it started swimming through internal plant pipes. Finally, the beaver emerged and climbed up on a basin ledge and the contractor put him in a trap to be relocated.

Burks also reported that TLWWTF employees saw a raven hanging upside down, seemingly on purpose, on a power line near a hawk perched on the adjacent power pole. The staff took photos of this event. The raven flew away, but returned to land on this same power line and hang upside down again, perhaps "to freak out the hawk." Kendrick said the raven was "trying to drive the hawk batty."

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The next meeting is scheduled for 10 a.m. Jan. 11 at the Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility, 16510 Mitchell Ave. Meetings are normally held on the second Tuesday of the month and are open to the public from all three owner-districts. For information on virtual meeting access, call Bill Burks at 719-481-4053.

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Donala Water and Sanitation District, Dec. 9

# Board considers volume-based sewer rates

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

On Dec. 9, the Donala Water and Sanitation District (DWSD) board considered moving to a volume-based approach to sewer rates. The board voted on resolutions addressing an upcoming board election, funding for bonds, the proposed 2022 budget and appropriations, rates for 2022, and mill levy certifications. The board also heard a report from District Manager Jeff Hodge and other operational reports.

**Board considers new approach to sewer rates**

Currently, DWSD charges a flat monthly rate of \$37.85 per residence for sewer service. Roger Sams of GMS Inc. Consulting Engineers (GMS), gave the board a presentation on volume-based rates for the sewer service to consider.

Sams said a volume-based cost of service approach would improve equity among users but would require an annual assessment of each customer's usage of sewer service. Volume-based rates would need to cover daily operational costs and administrative costs, Sams said. Capital improvements that expand the system should be funded by the customers who make that expansion necessary. Improvements that benefit all customers, such as radium removal, should be funded by all customers. Maintenance costs should also be funded by all customers. Financial reserves also need to be considered when choosing an approach to rates, he said.

For 2022 through 2024, Sams estimated annual wastewater operating expenditures would be \$1.53 million and annual debt service, capital improvement projects, and renewal and replacement costs would be \$306,502. Sams calculated wastewater treatment costs at \$6.80 per 1,000 gallons, wastewater collection costs at \$4.36 per 1,000 gallons, and customer service costs at \$8.42 per month per customer.

Sams said the guiding principles for developing user charges were:

- Rates must be just and reasonable.
- Rates must relate to the district's purpose and operating and capital costs.
- Rates must not be discriminatory and should provide revenues proportional to the cost of service.

Sams presented a revenue model that divided customers into three classes: single-family detached, multi-family attached, and commercial. His model

estimated total annual user revenue would be \$1.85 million.

Sams proposed wastewater rates for 2022 that would have a \$5.50 service charge and an \$8.38 charge for each thousand gallons of wastewater generated. He suggested the wastewater rate be increased to \$8.77 per thousand gallons in 2023 and to \$9.16 in 2024. The proposed rate for 2022 would mean a 5.28% increase for the typical user, he said, noting that the district's planned resolution to set rates, discussed below, increases the flat sewer rate to \$39.55, which is a 4.49% increase, an amount very close to his recommended rate.

In discussions following the presentation, the consensus of the board was to do a feasibility study of volume-based rates as a next step and to consider going to the approach beginning in 2023.

**Board election scheduled**

Resolution 2021-9 calls for a district election to be held on May 3, 2022, between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. The polling place will be the DWSD office at 15850 Holbein Drive, Colorado Springs. The seats currently held by Directors Ed Miller and Wayne Vanderschuere will be on the ballot. The designated election official is Christina Hawker. Self-nomination forms are available at the district office and must be returned before close of business on Feb. 12. If only two people submit forms, the election can be canceled.

The board voted unanimously to approve the resolution.

**Bond rules amended**

Resolution 2021-10 allows the district to use funds from capital accounts for projects that will be funded by bonds before a bond is passed and then reimburse the capital accounts from bond revenues. The intent is to allow certain capital projects, such as renewable water rights acquisitions, well construction, and maintenance projects, to begin before the bond is passed. The district currently has no bonds planned, but Piper Sandler, the district's bond counsel, recommended the district put the policy in place to improve flexibility.

The resolution passed with a unanimous vote.

**2022 budget adopted and funds appropriated**

Resolution 2021-11 proposes a DWSD budget for 2022 that includes total expenditures of \$25.6 million

and estimates revenues of \$32.3 million. Resolution 2021-12 appropriates funds as required by the proposed budget.

Both resolutions passed on unanimous votes.

**Most rates unchanged for 2022**

Resolution 2021-13 proposes rates for 2022. Only the following rates will change in 2022:

- The minimum water service rate will increase to \$29.06.
- The water usage rates for all tiers will increase 3%.
- The charge for construction water will increase to \$16.76 per 1,000 gallons.
- The sewer service rate will increase to \$39.55 per month.
- The Disconnect Letter Fee will increase to \$8.
- The Unauthorized Hydrant Use Penalty will increase to \$50 plus \$25.15 per 1,000 gallons used.

The board voted unanimously in favor of the resolution.

**Mill levies certified**

Resolution 2021-14 sets mill levy rates for the DWSD service area A (all customers outside of Chaparral Hills); Resolution 2021-15 sets mill levy rates for DWSD service area B (customers in Chaparral Hills). The two areas have different rates because Chaparral Hills uses septic only and does not need sewer service from DWSD.

The mill levy for area A is 21.296 mills; the mill levy for area B is 10.648 mills.

Both resolutions passed on unanimous votes.

**Highlights of operational reports**

In his Manager's Report, Hodge told the board:

- Planning for radium removal is proceeding.
- Filter media has been removed at the Holbein Plant.
- Wells 2A and 2D have been assessed by Leonard Rice Engineers and may be back in production as early as January.
- Water tank inspections showed more deterioration than expected. GMS is focusing on the Latrobe tank first, followed by the Holbein tank.

The Financial Report showed no issues and was approved by a unanimous vote.

The meeting ended with an executive session to discuss real property negotiations. No business was conducted after the executive session.

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The next meeting is scheduled for Jan. 20 at 1:30 p.m. Generally, board meetings are held the third Thursday of the month and include online access 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 www.donalawater.org for more information about the district.

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Monument Sanitation District, Dec. 15

Financial reports approved; election scheduled

By Jackie Burhans and James Howald

At its December meeting, the Monument Sanitation Department (MSD) reviewed financial reports from two months. It voted on two administrative resolutions and approved a new policy governing the use of its conference room by community members. Finally, it heard operational reports.

The meeting ended with an executive session to discuss personnel issues.

Financial reports prompt questions

After the board voted to approve the financial report for October, Director Laura Kronick raised questions about the line-items for engineering fees and repair costs. She said she believed the October report showed the district had overspent its budget.

District Manager Mark Parker explained that more than expected was spent on engineering fees because from January to May the district outsourced technical work previously done in-house, such as utility locates and inspections, to GMS Inc. Those tasks are once again done in-house, Parker said. He attributed the increase in the line-item for repairs to the unexpected purchase of an air-conditioning unit. That purchase was approved by the board, he said.

Chairman Dan Hamilton pointed out that the district spent more than it had budgeted, but revenue was also higher than expected. Parker said the district was \$571,000 ahead for the year. Parker attributed the unexpected spending to the district's hiring of himself as district manager and to fees paid to GMS. Treasurer John Howe said he would have another look at the financial report and find answers to Kronick's ques-

tions.

The board voted unanimously to approve the financial report for November with little discussion.

Administrative resolutions approved

The board voted unanimously to approve its Annual Administrative Resolution, which addresses operational details such as using *The Gazette* to publish the district's legal notices, the schedule and location of board meetings, and the schedule for financial audits.

It also passed unanimously a resolution governing the next election of directors to MSD. The resolution names Mandi Kirk as the designated election officer and sets the election for May 3, 2022. The district office at 130 Second St. will be the polling place.

The terms of Howe and Director Katie Saucedo will expire in 2022. Anyone wishing to run for a seat on the board must submit a self-nomination form; those forms are available at the district's office.

Conference room policy and fee confirmed

The board voted to approve an updated conference room policy, which had been discussed at the previous board meeting.

Details about the policy can be found in the coverage of the November board meeting here: <https://www.ocn.me/v21n12.htm#msd>. Interested parties should contact MSD to get a copy of the meeting room rental agreement.

Highlights of operational reports

- In his Manager's Report, Parker said the Willow Springs development had purchased 40 taps from the district to date. He reported meeting with the El Paso County Department of Trans-

portation about its plan to pave Beacon Lite Road from County Line Road south to Wakonda Way. Beacon Lite Road will also be straightened and flattened to match part of The Gap project. Parker said he met with the developers managing the Front and Second Street redevelopment project, who are planning to build three commercial and nine residential properties at that location. Some of the residences will be above the commercial buildings, he said.

- Commenting on the Engineer's Report submitted by GMS, Parker noted that the Monument Ice Rink was considering getting its water from Triview Metropolitan District (TMD). Parker said if the ice rink decided to join TMD, the rink would also need to handle their sewage through TMD, which would require the construction of a lift station.

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Monument Sanitation District meetings are normally held at 9 a.m. on the third Wednesday of the month in the district conference room at 130 Second St., Monument. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Jan. 19 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.

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Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, Dec. 20

New year to bring new rates; lake trail to be temporarily closed

By James Howald

At its December meeting, following a public hearing on proposed water and sewer rates for 2022, the Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) voted to increase those rates. The board held a public hearing and a vote on the proposed budget for 2022 and held a second public hearing and amended the current budget for 2021.

The board considered a request for supplemental water from Mountain Springs Recovery and renewed its annual contract with the Chilcott Ditch Co. It was announced that a portion of the trail surrounding Lake Woodmoor would be closed to walkers until construction of the Lake Pump Station is complete. Finally, the board heard operational reports.

Board approves rate increases for 2022

Board President Brian Bush opened the public hearing on water and sewer rates, and District Manager Jessie Shaffer introduced Andrew Rheem, of Raftelis Financial Consultants, who presented the final proposal for water and sewer rates.

Rheem said he had incorporated the direction given to him by the board at its November meeting into his final proposed rates. For 2022, Rheem recommended a 5% increase in tap fees, a 2% increase on sewer fees, and a 5% increase to both the base fee and the tiered usage charges for water. Rheem recommended no change to the Renewable Water Infrastructure Fee (RWIF). Rheem said his analysis showed water and sewer rates should increase by the same amounts from 2023 to 2026 to allow the district to continue to fund its service delivery and planned capital improvement projects.

Resident Bill Davis expressed his concern at the continued increases through 2026. He said he was a government retiree and expected cost of living increases in the 2% range. Bush pointed out that the board was only voting on rates for 2022 at the present time, although the board re-considered its long-term plan every year. Bush said in the two of the five years he had served on the board rates were not increased. Bush also mentioned that Social Security recipients would see a 5.9% increase in 2022. He acknowledged that inflation was a serious issue.

Shaffer explained that the base water fee covered the costs of keeping the district running—the costs

that would need to be paid even if residents used no water at all. The tiered usage charges pay for the water consumed and are priced to encourage conservation, he said.

Following the discussion with Davis, Bush closed the public hearing. The board voted unanimously in favor of Resolution 21-06, which established the rates, fees, and charges for 2022 as presented by Rheem.

Details of Rheem's presentation to the board at its November meeting can be found here: [www.ocn.me/v21n12.htm#wwsd](http://www.ocn.me/v21n12.htm#wwsd).

WWSD rates are published on its web page here: [www.woodmoorwater.com/services/residential-services/rates-and-charges.html](http://www.woodmoorwater.com/services/residential-services/rates-and-charges.html)

Proposed 2022 budget approved

At its Nov. 15 meeting, the board opened a public hearing on the proposed budget for 2022. The public hearing was still open during its Dec. 9 meeting, but there were no comments from residents and Bush closed the public hearing.

The board then voted unanimously to approve Resolution 21-08, which adopts the proposed 2022 budget and appropriates funds as required.

2021 budget amended

Bush opened a public hearing on amending the 2021 budget.

Shaffer explained that when the board refinanced its outstanding debt earlier in 2021 to take advantage of low interest rates and save money for the district, a situation requiring an amended budget was created. He said funds originally budgeted as debt service reserves were spent to reduce the amount the district needed to borrow when refinancing, and this made an amendment to the 2021 budget necessary.

There were no comments from the public, and the hearing was closed.

The board voted unanimously to approve Resolution 21-07, which amended the 2021 budget as required by the debt refinancing.

Mountain Springs Recovery renegotiates supplemental water agreement

Shaffer told the board that Mountain Springs Recovery (MSR), 1865 Woodmoor Drive, had previously negotiated a supplemental water service agreement with WWSD. MSR, which currently has about 110 beds, plans to expand its capacity and to build a recreation

center for its patients, Shaffer said, and has purchased nine acres adjacent to its property, including a duck pond. The land purchase increased the amount of water they are entitled to under the district's standard service, Shaffer said, and made it possible for MSR to eliminate the Tier 3 water it would need to purchase under the supplemental agreement. Tier 3 water is much more expensive than water in the lower usage tiers, Shaffer said.

Chuck Calkins, regional controller for MSR, said its expansion was hindered by the difficulty of hiring additional staff and that the estimated cost of the recreation center might be prohibitive.

In response to a question from Bush, Shaffer explained that WWSD would need to be in the chain of title for the MSR property to ensure that WWSD would be paid the surcharge owed to the district if MSR ever exceeded the amount of water specified in their supplemental service agreement.

The board voted unanimously to authorize Bush to sign the updated agreement with MSR.

Happy New Year!

IT'S A CELEBRATION!

2022

Have a healthy, happy and prosperous Year!



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**Contract with Chilcott Ditch Co. renewed**

Shaffer told the board that the district’s contract with the Chilcott Ditch Co. (CDC) needed to be renewed for 2022. WWSD owns 55% of the company and other shareholders combined own 45%. WWSD operates and maintains the ditch, which diverts water from Fountain Creek into the Callahan reservoir on Woodmoor Ranch, with other shareholders drawing off their portion of the water for agricultural purposes. CDC pays WWSD \$1,500 monthly for its administrative services and \$31 per hour for the work done to maintain the ditch.

The board voted unanimously to approve the contract as presented.

Details about the Chilcott Ditch, which was built in 1865 and incorporated in 1874, can be found here: <https://chilcottditch.com/>

**Trail to close until Lake Pump Station complete**

During public comments, resident David Hamilton-Smith expressed concern about the number of trees removed due to the construction of a new Lake Pump Station and pipeline. Operations Manager Dan La-Fontaine assured Hamilton-Smith that the project included funds to restore the landscape when the project was complete. Shaffer said the restoration effort would be planned in detail when it was known exactly how many trees would be removed to accommodate the new pipeline. He said the contractor had completed erosion control and stormwater management plans, and black fence, hay bales, and wattles would be used to prevent erosion during the construction.

Hamilton-Smith’s questions prompted Bush to bring up a topic he was planning to mention to the board later in the meeting. Bush said he had concluded it was necessary to close the trail surrounding the southern half of the lake to pedestrians until the construction of the new Lake Pump Station was complete.

Shaffer explained that the district’s policy was to allow residents to walk on the trail, but recently the contractor had expressed safety concerns with people walking through the construction site while work was



**Above:** This map of Woodmoor Lake shows the portion of the adjacent trail that is temporarily closed to pedestrians. *Map courtesy of Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District.*

in progress. The contractor’s equipment had been vandalized, requiring a report to be filed with the El Paso County Sheriff’s Office. The contractor put up fencing that had been pushed aside. All of this led

Shaffer to conclude access to the trail needed to be suspended temporarily, and he asked Woodmoor Public Safety to enforce the ban on use of the trail.

Shaffer emphasized that if the contractor did not finish the project on schedule, it would delay the re-filling of Woodmoor Lake, leading to an inability to meet peak water demand in the summer of 2022. The contractor was also struggling with the difficulty of obtaining needed materials, he said. Shaffer said he would contact Lewis-Palmer School District 38 to ask them to let students know the trail could not be used to walk to Lewis-Palmer Middle School.

Bush noted that this closure would probably delay construction on the Safe Routes to School trail.

The board agreed to close the trail until the construction was complete.

- Highlights of operational reports**
- In his Manager’s Report, Shaffer said the group working on a water re-use plan that will bring water from Fountain Creek north to WWSD customers applied to the El Paso County Commission for \$45 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding.
  - There were six water line breaks in November: three were saddle failures and three were shears.
  - A property just east of I-25 and south of County Line Road will be developed into 514 Single Family Equivalent (SFE) residences. The district serves 3,800 SFEs now and expects that to increase about 25% (1,200 SFEs) in the next four to six years.

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The next meeting is scheduled for Jan. 10 at 1:00 p.m. Meetings are usually held on the second Monday of each month at 1 p.m. Meetings are held at the district office at 1845 Woodmoor Drive; please see [www.woodmoorwater.com](http://www.woodmoorwater.com) or call 488-2525 to verify meeting times and locations.

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*El Paso Board of County Commissioners, Dec. 2, 7, 14, and 21*

# 2022 budget approved amid dispute over more funding for Public Health

*By Helen Walklett*

During December, the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approved the 2022 budget amid disagreement over the additional funding allocated to El Paso County Public Health. The commissioners also made decisions relating to various developments in the Tri-Lakes area.

**Commissioner attacks Public Health as 2022 budget adopted**

At the regular BOCC meeting on Dec. 7, the commissioners voted to adopt and appropriate the 2022 budget. Making the motion to approve, Commissioner Holly Williams described El Paso County as “an example of a county that is very frugal and a county that runs its government on a low cost per citizen.” Commissioner Longinos González Jr. said, “As I second this I’d like to also highlight that I’m very proud of the effort in terms of getting an additional \$14 million more in this budget for roads than in last year’s budget.”

Just ahead of the final vote, Commissioner Carrie Geitner moved two amendments, both of which failed due to lack of a second. The first would have moved the additional \$150,000 in funding allocated to Public Health to the Department of Public Works for road improvements; the second would have reallocated the funding to the District Attorney’s Office. Geitner then went on to outline her displeasure and disapproval of Public Health’s handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.

She said, “So, in my opinion the bureaucracy of Public Health has grown too powerful with a mostly unelected board that does not answer to the people and that some members, including the chair recently [sic] of the board have shown disdain for our community,” and continued, “They should not be empowered by the use of additional tax dollars hard earned by our citizens to further their tyrannical aims while the citizens protest their actions. Public Health is not a trusted source of information, and it is unsuccessful in their mission because of their failure to acknowledge real and emerging science, opting instead to promote propaganda aimed at controlling citizens

and repeat the political left narrative of trust the science while again actually censoring the science.”

Geitner said the chair of the Public Health board had called those that do not get the COVID vaccine “selfish.” She also said the Public Health director specifically lied to the education community, hiding behind state mandates and telling elected officials that she would not implement any local requirements for quarantine.

She continued, “I am not going to stand about while our citizens’ civil liberties are under attack, even if it’s well-intentioned, even if it’s supposedly for their own good. El Paso County Public Health is misguided at best, and I won’t speculate at worst. If this Public Health agency is going to be used in this manner, even if it’s under the guise of being for our own safety, I will not continue to support its influence. They need to be forced to take a hard look at their actions over the last year.” She stated, “We have better ways to spend our local tax money and that includes either on our roads or in the public safety space where we know crime is on the rise, is a true threat to our citizens thanks in most part to the idiotic policies of the Democrats in our state.”

Geitner felt there had not been adequate discourse on the matter. Commissioner Cami Bremer disagreed, stating there had been passionate and public discussion of the budget at the three public hearings.

Chair Stan VanderWerf said he empathized with several of Geitner’s comments and did not have a lot of trust in the Centers for Disease Control. However, he said it was his firm belief that Public Health had focused on education and adamantly stayed away from mandating masks and vaccines, which he felt was the right choice.

VanderWerf brought the topic up again at the Dec. 14 BOCC meeting, calling Geitner’s comments “an unfortunate event that took place last week at this board meeting where a dedicated, hardworking senior official affiliated with El Paso County was verbally and publicly attacked.” He said the work of the board was to debate policy, budgets, and do the busi-

ness necessary for citizens and that personal attacks would not be tolerated. He said if it happened again, he would call the speaker out of order and recess the meeting if necessary.

Geitner said she 100% stood by her comments, stating, “I will not be bullied either by the chair of the board or anyone else to do anything other than stand up for the constituents that brought me here. I’m not here to make friends and I’m not here to pretend that things aren’t happening that are happening.” Cutting her off, VanderWerf recessed the meeting. It resumed several minutes later, moving on to the next agenda item.

The Dec. 7 vote to approve the budget was 5-0. Geitner said she voted yes because she supported the budget, particularly the additional funding for roads.

**Winsome development adds three lots**

At the Dec. 21 BOCC Land Use meeting, the commissioners approved an amendment to the Winsome development’s preliminary plan to allow an increase in the total number of single-family residential lots from 143 to 146. The 768-acre development is zoned RR-5 (residential rural) and CC (commercial community) and is located at the northwest corner of the Hodgen Road and Meridian Road intersection.

The application came to the BOCC from the Planning Commission, which voted to recommend it for approval at its Dec. 16 meeting. At that meeting, Joe DesJardin, with developer ProTerra Properties, said the additional three lots would make the project more feasible. Two of the lots are being created from two 10-acre lots being divided into 5-acre lots. The third lot is land previously not thought developable.

At their Dec. 14 meeting, the commissioners approved the final release of a letter of credit for \$401,362 for subdivision improvements at Winsome Filing No. 2 following their completion and satisfactory inspection.

**Dancing Wolf development**

Also at the Dec. 21 Land Use meeting, the commissioners approved a rezone and a vacation and replat request for the 25-acre Dancing Wolf development at the northeast corner of the intersection of Highway



83 and Hodgen Road. The requests were heard at the Planning Commission meeting on Dec. 16 as consent items and came to the BOCC with a recommendation for approval.

The land was zoned to PUD (planned unit development) in 1998, which allowed for seven residential lots and one commercial lot with an overall residential density of one dwelling unit per 4.59 acres. The allowed uses on the commercial lot were to remain in conformance with the now obsolete neighborhood business district (NBD) requirements which excluded bars, mineral extraction, heavy industrial, gas station, and a convenience store. The requests approved by the BOCC allow for the vacation of a right-of-way, which is deemed to be no longer needed, the creation of two more lots for a total of nine residential lots, and to allow for all uses within the CC (commercial community) zoning district with the exclusion of bars, mineral extraction, heavy industrial, gas station, and a convenience store. The two extra lots will be created by dividing two 5-acre lots into 2.5-acre lots.

**Approval for two minor subdivisions**

At its Dec. 7 Land Use meeting, the BOCC approved as a consent item a request by Dale and Stephanie McGehee for approval of a vacation and replat of lot

3 in the Mountain Shadow Ranch subdivision to create two single-family residential lots. The 10.5-acre property is zoned RR-5 (residential rural) and is located about a quarter of a mile north of the Hodgen Road and Thompson Road intersection, west of Black Forest Road. The application was heard at the Planning Commission meeting on Nov. 18 and came to the BOCC with a recommendation for approval.

At the Dec. 21 Land Use meeting, the commissioners approved a request from the Crowe family to create three single-family residential lots on their 20-acre property. The property is zoned RR-5 (residential rural) and is located along the west side of Roller Coaster Road about half a mile south of the Baptist Road and Roller Coaster Road intersection. The application came to the BOCC from the Dec. 2 Planning Commission with a recommendation for approval.

**Forest Lakes school site conveyed to School District 38**

At the Dec. 2 BOCC meeting, the commissioners voted to convey the 10-acre school site within the Forest Lakes development to Lewis-Palmer School District 38. The site was set aside for a future elementary school when Forest Lakes Filing No. 1 was approved

in the early 2000s. The school district has no immediate plans to begin construction.

At the same meeting, the commissioners approved the preliminary release of a subdivision bond for \$557,690 for subdivision improvements for Forest Lakes Filing No. 5.

**Other decisions**

- Dec. 7—the commissioners approved the preliminary release of a letter of credit for \$65,206 following the completion and inspection of all public improvements at the Jackson Ranch Filing 4 subdivision located east of Roller Coaster Road and north of Higby Road.
- Dec. 14—approved the issuance of an ambulance service license to the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District. The license is effective for a one-year period from Jan. 1, 2022.
- Dec. 21—approved the partial release of a letter of credit for \$1.39 million for subdivision improvements for the Grandwood Ranch development on the north side of Higby Road at the southernmost terminus of Furrow Road.

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Woodmoor Improvement Association, Dec. 15

Middle school speed limit signs to be reinstated

*By Jackie Burhans*

The Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) board met on Dec. 15 to hear about the school zone speed signs at Lewis-Palmer Middle School (LPMS), discuss community wildfire protection, and approve a project at The Barn.

**LPMS speed limit signs to return**

Director of Public Safety Brad Gleason reported that he, Woodmoor Public Safety Chief Kevin Nielsen, and Vice President Peter Bille met with El Paso County Department of Public Works (DPW) about the flashing school zone beacons removed from LPMS in 2019.

Gleason said DPW plans to install new signs that show the speed limit and the speed of approaching vehicles and will flash during school hours. Gleason said this is a huge win for the community. Bille said the plan is to install them, if possible, during the winter break.

**Community wildfire protection**

Covenants and Forestry Administrator Matthew Nelson provided the forestry update in Director of Forestry Tom Smith's absence.

The third reimbursement packet was submitted for the wildfire mitigation grant, yielding around \$20,000 for nine properties. WIA will send letters to 94 original intended recipients along the Woodmoor Drive defensible corridor to see if they would like to take advantage of the funding. The next set of targeted recipients will be owners of 125 secondary surrounding lots to build continuity in the fuel break. WIA is still projecting funding availability for anyone who wants to participate next year with close to \$200,000 left in the grant which must be spent within five years of its November 2020 start date.



**Above:** Board member and Director of Public Safety Brad Gleason reported that El Paso County's Department of Public Works intends to install programmable, flashing school speed zone signs like this image on Woodmoor Drive near Lewis-Palmer Middle School before students return from winter break. *Image provided by Woodmoor Improvement Association.*

Nelson said he is updating the Community Wildfire Protection Plan to reflect newer map information and scientific advancements. The current plan can be found at: <https://woodmoor.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/2017-update-CWPP-final.pdf>. Information on forestry and Firewise can be found at: <https://woodmoor.org/forestry-firewise/>.

Bush said that anybody who doubts the danger should take note of the fire that occurred recently between I-25 and Ent and the Great Wolf Lodge. This illustrates why the board is so concerned with open fires and fireworks, and he asks residents to respect

the bans.

**Barn project approved**

Director of Common Areas Steve Cutler noted that the WIA office entry at The Barn is not up to code. WIA wants to put an overhang porch in front that fits the overall design. The board unanimously approved the request for \$13,000.

**Board highlights**

- Dues invoices went out in December with payment required by Jan. 1.
- Ballots for the 2022 WIA board election will go out in early January.
- Due to the COVID-19 situation, WIA has not decided if the annual meeting, scheduled for Jan. 31, will be in-person.
- Bush thanked Cutler for helping with some exterior painting on The Barn and congratulated those who worked with the county to restore the school signs.
- Bush once again asks residents to return trash cans to storage after trash has been picked up.

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The WIA Board of Directors usually meets at 7 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month in The Barn at 1691 Woodmoor Drive, Monument. The next meeting will be on Jan. 26. Check the website for information on the annual meeting.

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

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

December Weather Wrap

*By Bill Kappel*

December was dry and warm, continuing the pattern that started in October. In fact, the amount (or lack thereof) of snowfall for the three-month period from October-December was the lowest on record in many locations along the Front Range. The official observational site at the Colorado Springs airport has recorded only a trace of snowfall so far this season. This has already shattered the latest first measurable snowfall (at least 0.1 inch), as the old record was Dec. 2.

For us on the Palmer Divide, we have had measurable snowfall each month, but the amounts have been way below normal, again including December. Not surprisingly, temperatures were well above normal as well, as a consistent ridge of high pressure continued to dominate our weather pattern producing strong west to southwest flow into the region. This results in down sloping, dry, and mild weather for everyone east of the Continental Divide.

This doesn't mean we didn't get some periods of "exciting" weather during the month, but they were few and far between. The month started warm and dry, with highs in the mid-60s on the 1st and 2nd, setting some daily record highs in the region. Clear and mild conditions continued through the 5th,



**Above:** Clouds rolled into the Pikes Peak region at a high speed on the morning of Dec. 15. A small amount of much needed precipitation accompanied the extreme winds that reached up to 100 mph along the Front Range. The wind arrived mid-morning, causing a dust storm and making travel conditions dangerous and impossible for many during the day. I-25 southbound from Monument Hill closed for several hours after multiple high-profile vehicles overturned from Garden of the Gods Road to Baptist Road. Many trees were downed during the unusual event and damage was widespread along the Front Range, with more than 100,000 customers experiencing power outages throughout the day and into the evening hours in towns and cities throughout the state. *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*





Above: Christmas Eve. Photo by Bill Kappel.

when a quick-moving cold front swept through and produced a few light snow showers the evening of the 5th to the morning of the 6th. Although this front was moisture starved, it did drop temperatures about 40 degrees between 3 and 7 p.m. on the 5th.

After a few more days of dry and quiet weather, another quick-moving and moisture-starved front moved through during the morning of the 10th, with areas of light snow producing a half to 1 inch of new snow for the area.

Mild and dry condition again returned with highs reaching back into the upper 50s and low 60s from the 12th through the 14th. During this time, several strong storm systems were affecting the western U.S. Eventually, the strongest of these systems moved through the region and produced a very tight pressure gradient starting around mid-morning on the 15th. This storm had a lot of energy with it, but again the west/southwesterly flow meant most of the moisture was lost in the mountains. But there was enough leftover moisture to produce some rain and snow showers

that morning.

Once that band of showers moved east of us, the real “fun” began. The storms continued to strengthen to our east while high pressure built in from the west. This gradient between the low pressure to the east and high pressure to the west produced very strong winds. These were enhanced by temperature contrasts in the atmosphere, strong winds aloft and down sloping winds off the mountains. The result was a long period of very strong and damaging winds throughout the region. Winds gust over 90 mph occurred around the Palmer Divide, knocking over trees and high-profile vehicles. Even stronger winds occurred to our east, where a gust of 107 mph was recorded in Lamar.

Clear skies and a cooler air mass allowed temperatures to stay just below normal for the next few days, with low temperatures flirting with zero on the 18th.

Dry conditions returned and temperatures warmed from the 19th through the 23rd, with highs hitting the upper 50s.

We did receive a bit of a Christmas miracle, however, as the next in the series of strong western U.S. storms moved through on Christmas Eve. This had just enough upper-level support to produce a band of instability in the region, which resulted in a snow squall between 4 and 5 p.m. in the area. This produced a quick 1-2 inches of snowfall and a white Christmas for most of us, which was quite a surprise after missing out on all the snow for most of the month.

The remainder of the month was again quiet and dry, with gusty winds at times, but no organized storms moving through in our area. We did get colder at the end of the month with a little snowfall to end the year, but nothing significant enough to break our snow drought. The good news is the active pattern in the western U.S. managed to produce a lot of mois-

ture in the mountains during the second half of the month, with several feet of snow accumulating in the high country.

**A look ahead**

January can see the coldest temperatures of the year, but there is often a proverbial “January thaw” where mild temperatures make brief appearances. Of course, that’s been the case all winter so far, so hopefully this January will see a shift in the overall pattern to cold and snowy conditions. Unfortunately, precipitation is usually on the low side, with amounts generally less than an inch. The month experiences numerous sunny and windy days, with quick shots of snow in between.

**December 2021 Weather Statistics**

Average High	49.1° (+10.8 °)
100-year return frequency value max	50.5° min 32.6°
Average Low	20.7° (+7.4°)
100-year return frequency value max	22.4° min 5.4°
Monthly Precipitation	0.19”
	(-0.82”, 80% below normal)
100-year return frequency value max	2.82” min 0.00”
Monthly Snowfall	2.2”
	(-15.5”, 88% below normal)
Highest Temperature	66° on the 2nd
Lowest Temperature	1° on the 18th
Season to Date Snow	6.4”
	(-33.1”, 84% below normal)
	(the snow season is from Oct. 1 to Sept. 30)
Season to Date Precip.	1.22”
	(-2.21”, 64% below normal)
	(the water year is from Oct. 1 to Sept. 30)
Heating Degree Days	779 (-448)
Cooling Degree Days	0 (0)

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

## Letters to Our Community

Guidelines for letters are on page 31.

Disclaimer: The information and opinions expressed in Letters to Our Community are the responsibility of the letter writers and should not be interpreted as the views of OCN even if the letter writer is an OCN volunteer.

**Monument trustees need to enforce remote attendance rule**

Thank you for your reporting of the Nov. 17 Monument Board of Trustees meeting and for reminding us of the trustees’ previous decision to limit how many

times a trustee may attend remotely. Why would the trustees enact a rule then not obey it at all? I hope that somebody has already pointed out this error to the board and that they will remember to follow it in the future. If we cannot trust them with these small things, then I question whether we can trust them with larger issues.

**Angie Curry**

**Every penny counts**

I can’t say enough about the generosity of the people in the Tri-Lakes area. Since Nov. 15, I have been a bell

ringer at Safeway for the Salvation Army almost daily. The smiles, the greetings, and comments were heartwarming. Comments ranged from “Thank you for doing this” to “Your organization cared for my brother right up to his death.” Of course, I had my greetings like “Your halo is blinding me” as she came out of the blinding sun, “Every penny counts,” and “Have a wonderful day.” My thanks go out to all for your donations, Mama Bear for the hot cocoa, and others for coffee and cocoa. Bless you.

**John Howe**

## Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

### New year, new beginnings

*By the staff at Covered Treasures*  
*“A new heart for a New Year, always!”*  
—Charles Dickens

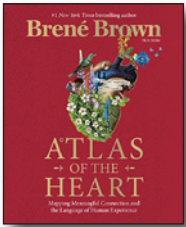
Start the new year off strong with books that can have a positive influence.

**Atlas of the Heart: Mapping Meaningful Connection and the Language of Human Experience**  
By Brené Brown (Random House) \$30

Bestselling author Brené Brown takes you on a journey through 87 emotions and experiences that define what it means to be human. As she maps the necessary skills and an actionable framework for meaningful connection, she provides the language and tools to access new choices and second chances in a way that builds connection. Brown says, “I want this book to be an atlas for all of us, because I believe that, with an adventurous heart and the right maps, we can travel anywhere and never fear losing ourselves.”

**The 5 AM Club: Own Your Morning Elevate Your Life**  
By Robin Sharma (Harper Collins) \$17.99

For more than four decades, Robin Sharma has helped people lead lives that inspire the world. Now he shares his insights and battle-tested tools developed by working with the most successful people on the planet. Based on the key insight that winning starts at the beginning of the day, Sharma shows how to reduce stress, improve focus, unleash uncommon creativity, achieve exponential productivity, and restore balance.



**Keep Moving: Notes on Loss, Creativity, and Change**  
By Maggie Smith (Atria) \$24

In this deeply moving book of quotes and essays, Maggie Smith writes about new beginnings as opportunities for transformation. Like kintsugi, the Japanese art of mending broken ceramics with gold, Smith celebrates the beauty and strength on the other side of loss. This is a book for anyone who has gone through a difficult time and is wondering: What comes next? There is also a companion, *Keep Moving: The Journal*, which guides readers to find beauty in the present moment, embrace change, and create a life we love. (\$16)

**Hear Yourself: How to Find Peace in a Noisy World**  
By Prem Rawat (Harper One) \$26.99

The renowned teacher and author Prem Rawat shows how to quiet the noise of our busy lives to hear our unique authentic voice. The culmination of a lifetime of study, this book lays out the crucial steps we can use to focus on the voice within. Packed with powerful insights, compelling stories, and practical wisdom that enlighten us to a simple way to listen, Rawat says, we can “profoundly change our understanding of ourselves, those around us, and our lives.”

**The Girl in the Red Boots: Making Peace with My Mother**  
By Judith Ruskay Rabinor, PhD (She Writes Press), \$16.95

Can a mother be loving and selfish, caring and thoughtless, deceitful and devoted? Weaving tales from her practice and her life, psychologist Dr. Judy Rabinor traces her journey becoming a wounded healer and ultimately making peace with her mother,

and herself. It is filled with hard-won life lessons, including the fact that it’s never too late to let go of hurts and disappointment and develop compassion for yourself and even for your mother. Rabinor achieved healing of her relationship years after her mother died.

**It’s Never Too Late to Begin Again: Discovering Creativity and Meaning at Midlife and Beyond**  
By Julia Cameron (Tarcherperigee) \$18

Julia Cameron has inspired millions with her bestseller on creativity, *The Artist’s Way*. In *It’s Never Too Late to Begin Again*, she shows that retirement can be the most rich, fulfilling, and creative time of life. This 12-week course aimed at defining and creating the life you want to have includes simple tools that will guide and inspire you to explore your creative dreams, wishes, and desires—and help you quickly find that it’s never too late to begin again.

**365 Joyful Poems**  
By Lon Wartman (VBW Publishing) \$24.95

Local author Lon Wartman has compiled his poems that “are my moments, my reflections, on how we need to think, write and dream of the joyful and positive sides of life. To dwell on the negative is not a healthy and good way to live. These are choices we all must make and, in that regard, I committed myself to write lines that would not only make me feel good but lines that would help others overcome these most trying of times.”

Until next time, happy reading.  
*The staff at the Covered Treasures can be contacted at [books@ocn.me](mailto:books@ocn.me).*



January Library Events

Despite understaffing, Friday and Saturday hours extended

By Harriet Halbig

Entering the new year, the Monument Library will continue to be closed on Thursdays until further notice. This is due to understaffing. Hours on Friday and Saturday have been extended from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. Patrons are welcome to take advantage of our resources and services, including access to computers, printing, faxing, and some programs.

To view a listing of programs, please see the website, ppld.org, select programs and the branch which you wish to view. Programs now include some toddler times and discussion groups for adults. Staff and volunteers at the library are masked. It is recommended that unvaccinated patrons and young children who are not yet vaccinated also wear masks. Please note that all Pikes Peak Library facilities

will be closed on Monday, Jan. 17 in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Happy New Year to all and we hope to see you soon. Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me.

Palmer Lake Historical Society, Dec. 12

88th Palmer Lake Yule Log Hunt

By Sharon Williams



Above: Andrew Leidenberger, who found the yule log, rides on it back to Palmer Lake Town Hall. Children took turns riding behind him as they were pulled along the half-mile route for celebratory ceremonies on the Village Green. Photo and caption by Sharon Williams.

As noted on a Palmer Lake website, “Palmer Lakes annual Yule Log Hunt is a Christmas card in motion.” This fun holiday event took place on Dec. 12 with ceremonies launched by officials of the Yule Log Committee on the Village Green at Palmer Lake Town Hall. Master of Ceremonies Niall Byrne, Mistress of Ceremonies Patricia Atkins, and Committee President Kurt Voelker facilitated the big event. The hunt and burning part of the yule log immediately following the hunt are beloved Christmas traditions today, with origins traced to ancient celebrations of the winter solstice. The Lake Placid Club, Lake Placid, N.Y., is known as the birthplace of this tradition in the United States. They brought community and families together starting in 1911 until it was ended at the time of the Winter Olympics at Lake Placid in 1980.

In 1933, Palmer Lake initiated this local holiday ritual with a splinter from the Lake Placid yule log, and now it’s the longest continual yule log event in the United States. At the Village Green, middle-school trumpeter Nolan Byrne heralded the start of the hunt. The hunters, along with the attending festive crowd, moved to the forestry starting point. The 8-foot notched log was soon found by 20-year-old Andrew Leidenberger. In doing so, he is the fourth member of the Leidenberg-

er family to become an honored recipient of the red and green cape. As the finder, Leidenberger rode on the log as it was pulled with long ropes by participants along the half-mile distance back to Town Hall. There was much excitement and laughter as children got to take turns riding on the log with Leidenberger. During the final stretch, local bagpiper Isaiah Watkins led the way into the Village Green. Normally following the hunt, part of the log is burned in the fireplace of the Palmer Lake Town Hall. Here, the hunters and townspeople gathered to ceremoniously toast the finder of the log and drink hot wassail, carol, and watch the yule log burn. This year, due to the restorative construction in process at Town Hall, an adapted version of this celebration was provided outside on the Village Green.

The Palmer Lake Historical Society monthly programs are presented at 7 p.m. every third Thursday of the month at the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce Community Room, 166 Second St., Monument. The society will hold its annual business meeting on Jan. 20 at 7 p.m., including the election of officers for board members ending their terms of office. For information, call 719-559-0837 or click on www.palmerdividehistory.org. Sharon Williams can be reached at sharonwilliams@ocn.me.

High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

Winter seed planting with milk jug as cloche

By Janet Sellers

January is traditionally a time of rest for the outdoor garden, but it’s also a fine time to prep some seeds, especially if the fall season got away from you for in-ground planting. Winter sowing with milk jugs We can do some interesting things indoors in January to prepare for spring planting. Besides making garden plans and ordering seeds, we can actually start planting as well indoors or outdoors. Winter planting works best for cold weather seeds, anything that needs stratification or the cold chill that prepares seeds for germination when things get warmer. This can work for any kind of seed, but of course it’s optimized for the seeds that will be cold hardy because they germinate first. I once had a couple of lettuce plants that I let go to seed. But the plant got buried under snow and then I couldn’t harvest the seeds. The following spring the seeds sprouted and

thrived even under intermittent spring snows that are actually protective against frost. When the weather warmed up, the lettuce grew well, and I had hundreds of lettuce plants albeit scattered throughout the garden bed. The secret to winter sowing is protection and having a jug as a miniature greenhouse. Our coldest months tend to be January and February, with plenty of snow in March, so the really cold hardy plants like columbine and others are fine planted in January, while mid- and late-spring planting is needed for the more tender annuals and vegetables that do not need the stratification process. This modern cloche is free Clear and semi-transparent milk, soda, or water jugs and other plastic containers with holes drilled in the bottom for drainage work well for this mini-greenhouse/cloche. I scoured the Empress of Dirt website for instructions. The method requires cleaning the

container thoroughly and providing drainage holes in the bottom and venting holes in the top, which a milk jug has by removing the cap. The containers are cut in half (leaving 4 to 6 inches of depth for the potting mix and water in the bottom part), and little slits are cut at the bottom of the top portion and the top of the bottom portion to allow the top to fit snugly over the bottom but lift easily for watering and checking the plants. An imperative is to label the jugs and seal with duct tape. The jugs can be placed in a sunny area outside. Avoid windy areas that could knock them over. It can be on the ground or a picnic table. Snow is welcome; monitor the jugs so they don’t dry out. Janet Sellers is an avid lazy—aka nature-focused—gardener, using Mother Nature’s methods for the local high desert forest climate. Share your wisdom and send your local gardening tips to JanetSellers@ocn.me.

Art Matters

Artists have a vision they share with others



By Janet Sellers

“You’re all artists. So I always say you’re not looking at me with two eyes, you’re looking at me with three eyes. I’m sure you’re seeing something that I’m not seeing. That’s why I’m collecting, because I’m really hungry for all the vision that you can give me besides the one that I can see with my own eyes.”—Sveva D’Antonio, collector. I was privileged to be with Italian art collector Sveva D’Antonio recently at a Zoom meeting. She told us about her passion for collecting art, and that she and her husband recently had inherited his father’s art collection, which started them collecting art as well. Her biggest interest is to get to know artists and share

the art connection. She feels that artists have a “third eye” of visionary experience instead of the two eyes, or the usual take on life that most people have. D’Antonio expounded on the idea that an artist shares their vision of creation and imagination through the materials the artist uses to share that vision or imagination, that the artist can reach levels of thought and bring that to the physicality of time and space by making the art, and especially by sharing it. She also was firm about working through galleries or a gallerist to purchase the art to support the chain of art economics. While she adores visiting personally with an artist whose work she’s attracted to, she and her husband, as collectors, will not break that special

chain of connection of collector, gallery, and artists. The D’Antonios share their collections with museums and other public venues. Many of the works in their collection do not fit into their homes in Italy, requiring specific venues to share the art publicly. Contemporary art collectors look to exchange ideas with contemporary artists as well as cherish the artworks personally and share publicly so that the artists’ creations and ideas can expand the thinking of people. They are not in the billion-dollar art world, yet they manage their finances to develop the body of their collection as visionaries, which they find important for present-day understanding and for future generations to see what artists and thinkers of our time made



and shared with each other and the world.  
\*\*\*\*\*  
Next month, I'll report on a completely different yet powerfully effective art collecting concept: Artist Support Pledge, now worldwide but begun in the U.K. Maintaining a vision for a sustainable and support-

ive community for all artists, developing a successful, sustainable, and equitable artist and maker community, they quote the aboriginal hunter-gatherer cultures as inspiration regarding the cultural practice of sharing resources for success.  
*Janet Sellers is an artist, writer, and speaker, with*

large public artworks exhibited in U.S. cities and smaller works for private collections. She creates engaging global studio visits, looking to share contemporary ideas that help create the future. Contact her at [janetsellers@ocn.me](mailto:janetsellers@ocn.me)

# Snapshots of Our Community

## Boy Scouts Honored Vets, Nov. 8



**Above:** Boy Scouts placed flags beside the veterans' headstones at Monument Cemetery on Nov. 8 in honor of Veterans Day, Nov. 11. Those pictured are, front row: Emmitt Giles, Wesley Inscoc, Luke Occhipinti, and Will Guttormsem. Back row: Tom Smith, Michael Occhipinti, Robert Makowsky, Cody Curtis, Benton Miles, Troy Occhipinti, Tanja Curtis, and Zack Curtis. *Photo by John Howe.*

## North Pole Fair, Dec. 4



**Above:** The North Pole at Tri-Lakes Craft Fair was held on Dec. 4 at the Grace Best Education Center with a record number of attendees. Organizer Bob Nissen reported that 1,974 attended the fair, donating 590 pounds of food, \$1,330 in cash, and two bins of toys and sporting goods. The bake sale sold out its 132 dozen cookies by 11:30 a.m. This year's goodies were provided by the Tri-Lakes Women's Club, Tri-Lakes Cares (TLC), and Monument Hill Kiwanis members. Nissen said that the 57 vendors were pleased with their day. Part of Monument's Small Town Christmas celebration, the fair is sponsored by Monument Hill Kiwanis and benefits TLC. The fair was not held last year due to COVID concerns. **Right:** Visitors were welcomed with a cheerful sign at the entrance. *Photos by Harriet Halbig.*



## Small Town Christmas, Dec. 4



**Above:** "Elf" Harriet Chambers, at right, poses with two shoppers as two others sit while their caricature is sketched outside of The Roost during Small Town Christmas in Monument on Dec. 4. *Photo by John Howe.*

**Right and below:** Downtown was full of happy children and visitors of all ages for the annual Small Town Christmas event on Dec. 4. Santa sent his special representative, Ranger Rick, decked out in traditional North Pole holiday garb, seen talking to passersby, and enchanting small children with his attire and polar bear staff. Prancer the reindeer was on hand as well, greeting visitors in her new antlers for the season, while across the street at the Trails End holiday tent, a wide variety of crafts, kitchen goodies, décor, and photography enticed holiday shoppers. *Photos by Janet Sellers.*





## Monument Tree Lighting, Dec. 4



**Above:**A huge crowd attended the annual tree lighting at Limbach Park in Monument on Dec. 4. Thousands of lights covered the many trees in the park and were even draped on the stage from top to bottom. **Below:** Santa and Mrs. Claus arrived on a fire engine from the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District. They made their way to the stage where they greeted children and heard their Christmas wishes. *Photo by Creighton A. Smith.*



## Drought Continues, Dec. 12



**Above:** On Dec. 12, Bristlecone Lake and the surrounding area exemplified the continuing effects of drought in the Tri-Lakes area and elsewhere on the Front Range. *Photo by David Futey.*

## Tip-A-Cop, Dec. 9

**Right:**The Monument Texas Roadhouse participated in Tip-A-Cop on Dec. 9, as local officers from the Monument and Palmer Lake Police Departments and El Paso County Sheriff's Office waited on tables to raise money for the Special Olympics. Special Olympians worked alongside the officers collecting tips and helping out. To donate, go to [specialolympics-co.org](http://specialolympics-co.org). *Photo by Marlene Brown.*



## Ornament Party, Dec. 11



**Above:** On Dec. 11, Palmer Ridge Honor Society students helped the Friends of Fox Run Park make a merry holiday ornament party with the community at large in the warming hut near the ponds at Fox Run Regional Park. The ornaments were made from "wood cookies," or slices of tree branches of fire mitigation "dog hair" (trees or wood that could be a potential fire hazard) of the area's ponderosa pines, and serve as a happy reminder to honor the park, trees, and the importance of fire mitigation efforts in our area. *Photo by Janet Sellers.*

## TLMA Benefit Concert, Dec. 18



**Above:** During the first half of the Tri-Lakes Music Association (TLMA) Christmas program on Dec. 18, vocal and instrumental solos, duets and ensembles performed excellent renditions of familiar Christmas songs. After the intermission, the full choir and orchestra, led by Rose Dunphey and Matt Manning, accompanied Dr. Heidi

Petak's narration of *The Christmas Story* from the Bible. This music program is held annually to raise money for Tri-Lakes Cares. CDs are available and donations can be made through the TLMA website at [www.trilakesmusic.org](http://www.trilakesmusic.org). *Photo by Steve Pate.*



## DWFPD Santa on Patrol, Dec. 18



**Above:** Santa Claus greets an excited crowd under sunny blue skies at the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District's annual Santa on Patrol event in Gleneagle on Saturday, Dec. 18. Children gathered along the route to see Santa travel through the neighborhoods aboard Engine 531. Of course, the main event was only one week away and for sure the stockings were all ready and waiting to be filled on Christmas Eve! **Right top:** Shannon Garrett and Santa Claus. **Right bottom:** Santa Claus, with Driver Engineer Luke Jones behind the wheel at the fire station. *Photos courtesy of DWFPD. Photo courtesy of DWFPD.*



## Black Forest AARP returns



**Above:** AARP Chapter 1100 Black Forest met in person on Dec. 8 for the first time since taking an almost two-year hiatus because of COVID-19. President Candace Lehmann presided over a short business meeting, which filled in the gaps since the group last met. Chapter Longevity Badges for 2020 and 2021 were handed out for those with five or more years of uninterrupted membership in the chapter. The badges were given to, from left, Helen Von Gunden (15 years), Lori Belk (5 years), Anna Skinner (5 years), Jim Belk (5 years), Durelle Pithy (5 years) and Beverly Schaab (10 years). Not shown: Karen Buck (5 years), Sue Fletcher (10 years) and Waldo Pendleton (25 years). **Right:** Santa's sleigh and some of the multitude of gifts that were given away. *Photos by Stan Beckner.*



## MPD, PLPD Santa on Patrol, Dec. 18



**Above:** The Monument and Palmer Lake Police Departments and the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Department teamed up Dec. 18 to deliver toys that had been donated to and collected by Toys for Tots. Santa and other officers are pictured on a quick break as the chosen families came to Monument Town Hall to receive their presents. *Photo by Marlene Brown.*

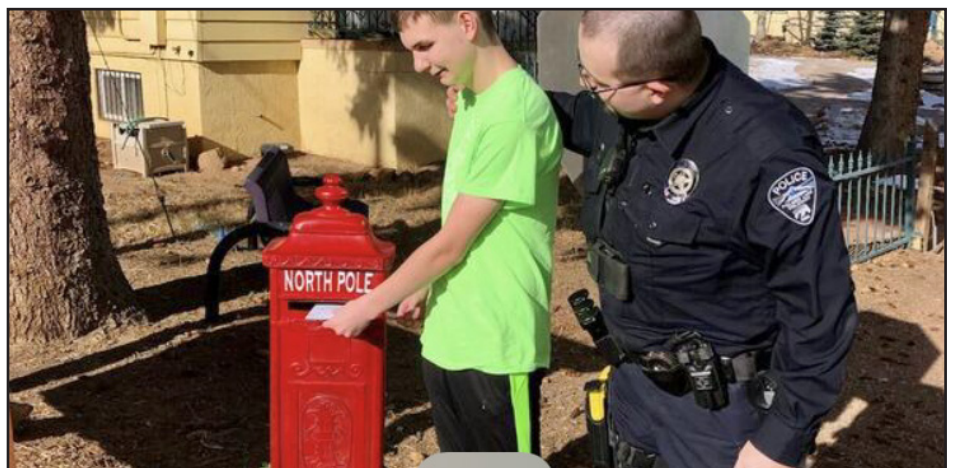
## Wreaths Across America, Dec. 18



**Above:** Local Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), the Boys Scouts, American Heritage Girls, and honorary members of the local community held a ceremony at Monument Cemetery along with cemeteries all over the nation. They laid wreaths simultaneously on veterans' gravesites during Wreaths Across America at 10 a.m. Dec. 18. Each family was able to place a wreath in honor and memory of a family member who was a veteran. The American Heritage Girls have been fundraising to sponsor wreaths and provided refreshments. To sponsor a wreath for next year, visit [www.wreathacrossamerica.org/pages/14960/overview](http://www.wreathacrossamerica.org/pages/14960/overview). *Photos by Marlene Brown.*



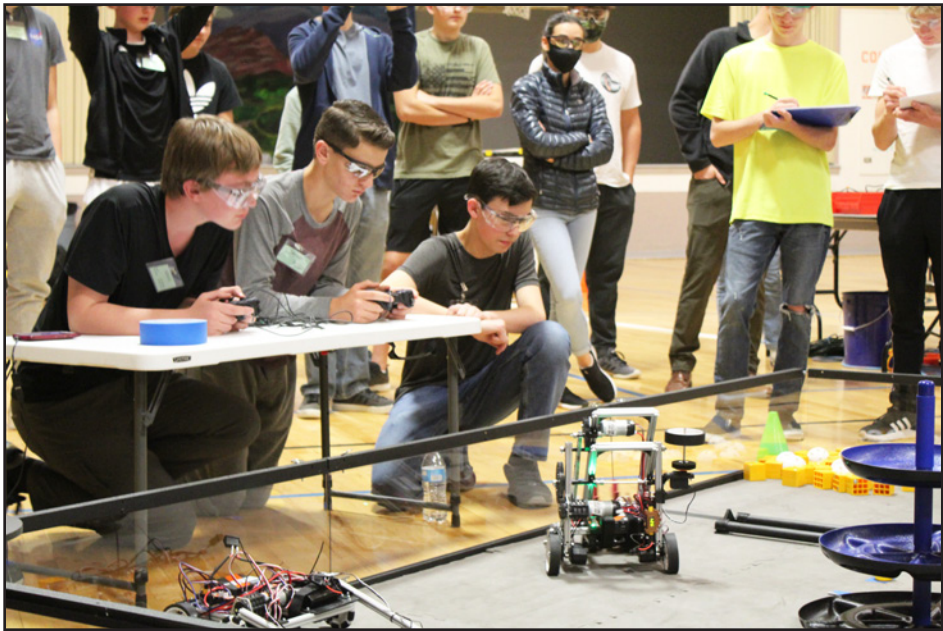
## Letters to Santa, Dec. 20



**Above:** People could drop off letters to Santa at the Palmer Lake Police Department last month. Here, Officer James Bentley watched as Tim from Monument mailed his letter to Santa. *Photo by Samantha Holmes.*

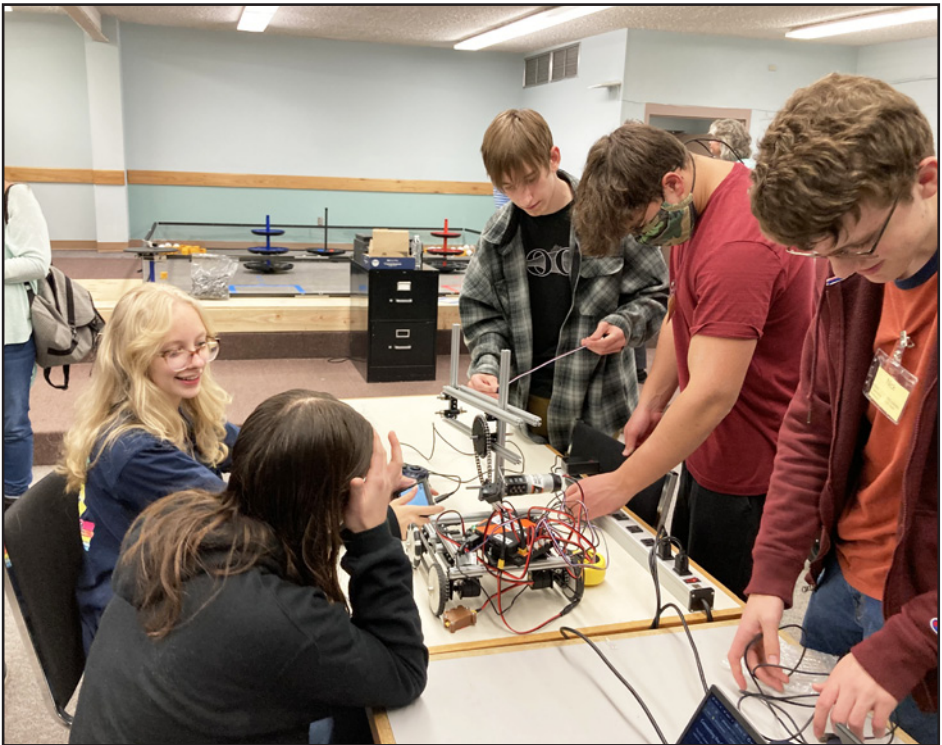


MITEE Exhibition



**Above:** Monumental Impact hosted the first of what's hoped to be an annual Monumental Impact for Technology, Engineering and Entrepreneurship (MITEE) exhibition at Grace Best on Nov. 20. The event let high school students and adults connect, network, and have fun running and sharing their projects in technology and engineering. There were areas for various robots like combat bots, drones, remote control, or autonomous bots. The group also hosted a First Tech Challenge (FTC) Scrimmage for Colorado FTC teams. From left, Bearbotics FTC Alpha Team members Adonis Kolasinski, Tanson Miles, and Carter Grizzle run their robot in a match. *Photo by Amber Wright.*

TLWC helps Monumental Impact



**Above:** The Tri-Lakes Women's Club (TLWC) got to witness the benefits of its 2021 grant to Monumental Impact on Nov. 12. TLWC members attended an Open Build, which Monumental Impact founder Jeanette Breton says gives students, coaches, and mentors "access to equipment, supplies, and mentoring for participants to improve their technology and engineering skills." She says the grant paid for a starter robotics kit so Bearbotics members could design, build, code, and operate robots. The TLWC Community Grants Program has awarded over \$1 million in grants to nonprofits, public service agencies, and education since 1973. The program focuses on smaller organizations that typically do not have the staffing or resources to pursue grants from major granting foundations. TLWC's grant application for 2022 will be available Jan. 15 through March 15 on the club's website, [www.tlwc.net](http://www.tlwc.net). From left are Whitney Walker, Ruby Pearlman, Kellen Gall, Ari Clark, and Nick Barton. *Photo by Chuck Leggiero.*

Fox Run Park Pet Memorial Tree



**Above:** People continued using the Fox Run Park Holiday Pet Memorial Tree this year as a way of celebrating the lives of pets. The tradition of placing ornaments on the tree started in 2007 in memory of Daisy Mae, a golden retriever. Daisy Mae enjoyed the park and in particular the area in vicinity of the tree at the junction of two trails. Since then, the number of ornaments placed on the tree has grown. There are requirements and restrictions for placing an ornament. The ornaments must be between 2-by-2 inches and 4-by-4 inches and may be made of metal, wood, pewter, plastic, or cardboard. The ornaments cannot be made of glass or food, among other noted restrictions. They may be placed on the tree after Thanksgiving and are removed by volunteers by Jan. 2. *Photo by David Futey.*

Key Club Volunteers at TLC, Dec. 15



**Above:** Volunteers of the Lewis-Palmer High School Key Club organize and assemble non-perishable items for Tri-Lakes Cares (TLC) food sacks. On Dec. 15, they prepared enough to provide for the needs of many Tri-Lakes area families and individuals. On Dec. 18, the TLC Christmas distribution for these households included toys and perishable food items. The annual Harvest of Love food drive in September and October fortifies TLC with many of these food items, which are donated and collected at schools throughout Lewis-Palmer School District 38. This year, Harvest of Love collected 17,256 pounds of non-perishable food along with \$10,129 in cash for TLC. Lewis-Palmer and Palmer Ridge High School Key Clubs provide hundreds of hours of volunteer community service to the Tri-Lakes area every year. *Photo by Max Williams. Caption by Sharon Williams.*

Bell Ringing, Dec. 18



**Left:** On Dec.18, Scott Ross, Monument Hill Kiwanis member, was one of many community volunteers ringing the bell for the Salvation Army Red Kettle campaign. Several hundred hours of volunteer time for this collaborative effort were provided by members of Tri-Lakes Women's Club; Cub Scouts with parents; K-Kids Club members with parents from Bear Creek Elementary School; Builders Club at Lewis-Palmer Middle School; Boy Scout Troop 17; Lewis-Palmer and Palmer Ridge High School Key Clubs; Monument Hill Kiwanis Club; and many other individuals in our Northern El Paso County area. Red Kettle locations were at various storefronts in the Tri-Lakes area during the holiday season. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, the Salvation Army distributes donations to the most vulnerable people—those living in poverty throughout El Paso County. *Photo and caption by Sharon Williams.*



# Why advertise in OCN?

- OCN is mailed FREE to every resident and business in the Tri-Lakes area. We mail more than 21,400 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 \$94,800!
- 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](http://www.ocn.me/advertise.htm) or contact John Heiser at (719) 488-3455 or [ads@ocn.me](mailto:ads@ocn.me).*

# An important message for our readers Our Community News needs your help!

*Our Community News* is an all-volunteer organization. For the past 20 years, our volunteers have provided unbiased reporting on important local issues, including real estate development, fire departments, school districts, and water availability. We have provided a very favorable platform for advertising local businesses. We have published letters to the editor to allow you to express your opinions on events in the Tri-Lakes area.

Now we find that we have more tasks than we have volunteers. Some vital jobs where we could use your help:

- Reporters. Reporting on local meetings, what they talked about and what they decided.
- Mailing assistants. Counting and lifting tubs of papers to take the monthly mailing to the post offices and stacks of papers to local businesses, loading and unloading mailing tubs from a truck at two locations, preparing postof-

fice paperwork, tub labels, subscription labels, etc.

- Drivers. Driving a rental truck to various post offices once a month.
- Ad sales assistants. We need volunteers who love *OCN* to contact local businesses and encourage them to advertise in *OCN*.

The time and skills involved vary greatly from job to job. OCN will provide whatever equipment and training you need.

Please join us today! Meet a group of interesting and committed people. Learn new skills—use your enthusiasm and creativity to benefit our community and celebrate unfiltered information.

Please call Publisher John Heiser at (719) 488-3455, or email [johnheiser@ocn.me](mailto:johnheiser@ocn.me) to see how you can contribute. Contact John today! He is waiting to hear from you. Together we can ensure that OCN continues to provide a vital service to our wonderful Tri-Lakes community.

# Our Community Notices

By Janet Sellers

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

## Seniors Driver's License Electronic Renewal

With the implementation of the Driver's License Electronic Renewal By Seniors Act (HB21-1139), Colorado seniors now have the permanent ability to renew their driver license or identification card online, but there are new laws to understand. Information is online via [mycolorado.state.us](http://mycolorado.state.us). Some restrictions apply to drivers aged 21-80, and drivers over 80 need a special doctor's statement. Coloradans who are concerned about an elder family member's ability to drive should email [dor\\_mvhelpdesk@state.co.us](mailto:dor_mvhelpdesk@state.co.us).

## DMV online and kiosks

Clerk & Recorder's Office provides motor vehicle and driver's license services. 30+ services at [mydmv.colorado.gov](http://mydmv.colorado.gov). Renew registration online or at a kiosk. Make appointments. check in for appointments and wait where it's convenient for you. The DMV encourages Coloradans to skip the trip and use its online services whenever possible. So before your next trip to the DMV, remember to save time, go online. Visit [DMV.Colorado.gov/Save-time](http://DMV.Colorado.gov/Save-time) for more information. See [epcdriives.com](http://epcdriives.com).

## CO 21 (Powers Blvd.) & Research Pkwy. construction

Work will be completed in fall 2022 and will consist of replacing the current at-grade intersection with an innovative Diverging Diamond Interchange by constructing an overpass for Powers Boulevard/Colorado Highway 21 traffic to move continuously through the intersection over Research Parkway. For many more details and rendering of final configuration, including a video showing new traffic flow, see <https://ccpci.net/cdot-powers-research.pdf>.

## I-25 and CO 21 (Powers Blvd) Interchange now open

A new interchange and a ¾-mile stub of state highway CO 21 (Powers Blvd.) connecting I-25 to Voyager Pkwy

opened Oct. 29. This \$65 million project is the first part of a two-part plan. Funding has not yet been secured to connect CO 21 from its current terminus at CO 83 & Interquest Pkwy. to Voyager Pkwy. For a map of the new interchange and connection from I-25 to Voyager Pkwy., see <https://i25powers.com/>.

## MVEA scholarships

Mountain View Electric Association's (MVEA's) college scholarship program deadline is **Jan. 17**. For details, see [www.mvea.coop/community/youth-programs/scholarships/](http://www.mvea.coop/community/youth-programs/scholarships/).

## MVEA planning broadband service

Mountain View Electric Association is planning to provide reliable, affordable, high-speed fiber broadband service to all its 51,000 members in the next six years. MVEA and Conexon Connect teams are now designing and mapping the network. For more information about MVEA and Conexon Connect's fiber-to-the-home project, visit [www.mvea.coop/broadband](http://www.mvea.coop/broadband).

## MVEA offers rebates

For information on MVEA's energy efficiency rebates, visit [www.mvea.coop/save-energy-money/rebates/](http://www.mvea.coop/save-energy-money/rebates/), or call 800-388-9881."

## It pays to use MVEA's bill paying options

MVEA offers credits for using making auto-pay and on-line payments. See ad on page 12.

## Palmer Lake Arts District forming

The newly forming Palmer Lake Arts District is looking for working artists interested in participating in an artist cooperative located in Palmer Lake, working artists and persons to organize and manage the coop. For inquiries contact [beforethegrid@aol.com](mailto:beforethegrid@aol.com).

## Work around

## Palmer Lake Town Hall

The ramp reconstruction work on the town museum and library is well underway. Also, Town Hall roof restoration will continue into December. Thus, staff is alerting residents that typically stroll through the town green area to be cautious and respectful of the construction equipment and process. Furthermore, due to construction crew parking in the area lots, it may be lim-



ited parking. Please feel free to contact the office to assist with business that can be conducted by phone or email for your convenience. Phone: 719-481-2953, Email: [info@palmer-lake.org](mailto:info@palmer-lake.org). Unfortunately, the Town Hall will not be available to rent for events through this time. Thank you for your understanding, and we look forward to celebrating both projects getting completed!

**Palmer Lake Vaile Museum to reopen**

Plans to reopen soon with several new exhibits upon completion of the improved handicap accessible ramp. We are in great need of volunteers to carry on the work of the society. Visit [www.PalmerDivideHistory.org](http://www.PalmerDivideHistory.org) or call 719-559-0837.

**Noxious weed removal is our responsibility**

As a private property owner, you are responsible for the removal of noxious weeds on your land to keep them from spreading. We often see plants we think are pretty that are really noxious. To see photos to help you identify local noxious weeds and get tips on removal and control, see <https://assets-communityservices.elpasoco.com/wp-content/uploads/Environmental-Division-Picture/Noxious-Weeds/Noxious-Weed-Control-Book.pdf>.

**Area code required for local (719) and (970) calls**

Colorado customers with numbers in the 719 and 970 area codes should dial 10-digits (area code + telephone number) for all local calls. They will still count as local calls. Check your safety and security alert devices to be sure they are programmed with 10-digit dialing. You can still dial just three digits to reach 711 (relay services) and 911 (emergency services) and other local three-digit services including 211, 311, 411, 511, 611, 711 or 811 are currently available in your community, dial these codes with just three digits.

**Openings on Monument boards**

The Town of Monument has openings on its Planning Commission and Board of Adjustments. For more information, visit and to download an application, go to <http://townofmonument.org/261/Available-Board-Openings>.

**Openings on Palmer Lake boards**

The Town of Palmer Lake continues to seek volunteer residents to serve on upcoming potential seats for the Planning Commission, the Parks Commission, and the Board of Adjustments. The Planning Commission meets once a month on the third Wednesday. The Parks Commission meets a minimum of once a month but also has opportunities to be involved in Work Groups for various Park areas. The Board of Adjustments meets up to once a month on the first Tuesday, as needed. To qualify, you must be a resident of the Town of Palmer Lake for a minimum of 12 consecutive months and be at least 18 years of age. See [www.townofpalmerlake.com](http://www.townofpalmerlake.com)

**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 youths, 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 Pet-

tigrew, 719-481-4864 x113, [VolunteerCoordinator@Tri-LakesCares.org](mailto:VolunteerCoordinator@Tri-LakesCares.org); or visit <https://tri-lakescares.org/volunteer/>.

**Tri-Lakes Cares needs us**

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](mailto:communityengagementmanager@tri-lakescares.org); or visit [www.tri-lakescares.org](http://www.tri-lakescares.org).

**LEAP—help for heating bills**

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

**WMMI seeks volunteers**

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

**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 719-488-0076, and leave a message or visit [www.coloradoseniorhelp.com](http://www.coloradoseniorhelp.com).

**Senior Beat newsletter—subscribe for free**

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

**Foot Care Clinic**

A registered nurse examines your feet and provides foot care advice, toenail trimming. Silver Alliance Senior Center across the street from the Tri-Lakes YMCA, on the Lewis-Palmer High School campus. By appointment only, 303-698-9496. \$40 charge unless insured through Kaiser. Info: Nurse Association, 719-577-4448.

**MCSS needs driver volunteers**

Mountain Community Senior Services is in desperate need of drivers to drive senior citizens to appointments. For information on how to help, call

719-488-0076, and leave a message or visit [www.coloradoseniorhelp.com](http://www.coloradoseniorhelp.com).

**El Paso County services to veterans**

If you or someone you know needs food, housing, transportation, behavioral health counseling, or employment support, Mt. Carmel continues to be a beacon of support for those who served. Please call 719-772-7000 or email [frontdesk@mtcarmelcenter.org](mailto:frontdesk@mtcarmelcenter.org) to be connected to a member of the Mt. Carmel team. For more information, visit [www.veteranscenter.org](http://www.veteranscenter.org).

**Can you volunteer today?**

Links to local organizations with an immediate need for volunteers are listed on the county’s website, [www.elpasocountyhealth.org/volunteering-and-donations](http://www.elpasocountyhealth.org/volunteering-and-donations), for groups like Care and Share, Crossfire Ministries, blood donations, Early Connections (volunteer from home opportunity), foster an animal, Medical Reserve Corps of El Paso County, Salvation Army, Silver Key, and United Way (ongoing opportunities).

**I-25 MyWay commuting options website**

In another effort to improve traveler and worker safety along the 18-mile-long construction zone of Interstate 25 between Monument and Castle Rock, rush-hour travelers now can take advantage of I-25 MyWay, a new partnership between the Colorado Department of Transportation and the Denver Regional Council of Governments. I-25 MyWay is offering transit, van-pool and carpool incentives to commuters willing to try a new mode of transportation between Colorado Springs and Denver. Taking more single-occupant vehicles off the road helps reduce congestion and enhances the environment. Commuters can learn more about eligibility and types of incentives at [i25MyWay.org](http://i25MyWay.org). The site will run through the end of construction in 2022.

**Sign up for “Reverse 9-1-1”**

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

**El Paso County Hazardous Materials & Recycling Collection Facility**

<https://communityservices.elpasoco.com/environmental-division/> Appointments required. 719-520-7878.

**Reading tutor volunteers needed**

Children’s Literacy Center provides free one-on-one literacy tutoring to Tri-Lakes children in grades 1-6 who are reading below grade level! Tutoring is at the Tri-Lakes Senior Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:30-6:30 p.m., and our Summer Session will run through Aug. 14. For more information, to become a volunteer tutor or to enroll your child, visit [www.childrensliteracycenter.org](http://www.childrensliteracycenter.org) or email Christine Jeffson at [Christine@childrensliteracycenter.org](mailto:Christine@childrensliteracycenter.org).

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Our Community Calendar

By Janet Sellets

Although we strive for accuracy in these listings, dates or times are often changed after publication. Please double-check the time and place of any event you wish to attend by calling the info number for that event. Please contact [calendar@ocn.me](mailto:calendar@ocn.me) with changes and additions.

**GOVERNMENTAL BODIES**

- **Forest Lakes Metropolitan District, Pinon Pines Metropolitan District 1, 2 & 3 board meeting.** Typically meets quarterly on the first Mon. at 4 p.m. **No meeting Jan. 3.** Meetings are held via teleconference. For virtual joining instructions and updates see [www.forestlakesmetrodistrict.com](http://www.forestlakesmetrodistrict.com).
- **Monument Board of Trustees meeting,** Mon., **Jan. 3,** 17, 6:30 p.m., Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Normally meets first and third Mon. Info: 719-884-801, [www.townofmonument.org/260/Board-of-Trustees](http://www.townofmonument.org/260/Board-of-Trustees) for remote attendance links.
- **El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) regular meeting,** every **Tue., Jan. 4,** 18, etc., 9 a.m. View agendas and meetings at

- [www.agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso](http://www.agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso). BOCC land use meetings are being held every first and third Tuesday of the month as needed at 1 p.m. Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade Ave., Suite 150, Colo. Springs. Info: 719-520-6430.
- **Palmer Lake Board of Adjustments,** **Tue., Jan. 4,** 5 p.m., Palmer Lake Elementary School Library, 115 Upper Glenway, Palmer Lake. Public hearing on a variance request to allow approximately 36 inches of deck stairs into the rear 25-foot setback for property located at 200 Lake Ave. A copy of the complete application is on file at the Town office, 42 Valley Crescent, Palmer

- Lake, at 719-481-2953. Dawn A. Collins, Town Clerk.
- **El Paso County Planning Commission meeting,** **Thu., Jan. 6,** 9 a.m. Regional Development Center, 2880 International Circle, Colo. Springs. Meetings are live streamed on the El Paso County News & Information Channel at <https://www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel>. Normally meets first & third Thu. (if required). Info: 719-520-6300, <https://planningdevelopment.elpasoco.com>.
- **Woodmoor Water & Sanitation District board meeting,** **Mon., Jan. 10,** 1 p.m., 1845 Woodmoor


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- Dr., Monument. Meets second Mon. Info: 719-488-2525, [www.woodmoorwater.com](http://www.woodmoorwater.com).
- **Tri-Lakes Wastewater Facility Joint Use Committee meeting**, Tue., **Jan. 11**, 10 a.m., 16510 Mitchell Ave. Meets second Tue. Info: Bill Burks, 719-481-4053.
  - **D38 District Accountability Advisory Committee (DAAC) meeting**, Tue., **Jan. 11**, 7-8:30 p.m., at administration building, 146 N. Jefferson St. Monument. Usually meets five times per school year on the second Tuesday of the month (Oct., Nov., Jan., Feb., Apr.). <https://www.youtube.com/user/LPSDCommunity>. Info: [t.mckee@lewispalmer.org](mailto:t.mckee@lewispalmer.org) or 719.785-4143. [www.youtube.com/user/LPSDCommunity](https://www.youtube.com/user/LPSDCommunity). Info: 719.481.9546, [vwood@lewispalmer.org](mailto:vwood@lewispalmer.org).
  - **Palmer Lake Sanitation District board meeting**, Wed., **Jan. 12**, 9 a.m., call-in only: 650-479-3208, Access Code 76439078, 120 Middle Glenway. Meets second Wed. Info: 719-481-2732. [www.plsd.org](http://www.plsd.org).
  - **Monument Planning Commission meeting**, Wed., **Jan. 12**, 6 p.m. Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Meets second Wed. To see the options for remote public participation in each meeting, visit [www.townofmonument.org/263/Planning-Commission-Board-of-Adjustment](http://www.townofmonument.org/263/Planning-Commission-Board-of-Adjustment). Info: 719-884-8028. [www.townofmonument.org](http://www.townofmonument.org).
  - **Palmer Lake Board of Trustees meeting**, Thu., **Jan. 13**, 27, 5 p.m. Palmer Lake Elementary School Library, 115 Upper Glenway. Usually meets second and fourth Thu. Info: 719-481-2953, all for current meeting location. [www.townofpalmerlake.com](http://www.townofpalmerlake.com).
  - **Monument Academy School Board meeting**, Thu., **Jan. 13**, 6 p.m. at the East Campus in the band room. 4303 Pinehurst Circle. Meets second Thu. Info 719-481-1950, <https://www.monumentacademy.net/school-board/board-meeting-minutes/>.
  - **Donald Wescott Fire Protection District board meeting**, Tue., **Jan 18**, 4 p.m. Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Dr. Meetings are usually on the third Tuesday. The DWFPD board is not allowing the general public to attend in person. Virtual instructions via website/administrator. For information, call Executive Administrator Stacey Popovich at 719-488-8680 or see [www.wescott-fire.org](http://www.wescott-fire.org).
  - **Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District board meeting**, Wed., **Jan 19**, 7 p.m., via Zoom only for public attendees. For updates and joining instructions visit [www.bffire.org](http://www.bffire.org).
  - **Monument Sanitation District board meeting**, Wed., **Jan. 19**, 9 a.m., 130 Second St. Zoom meeting. Find joining instructions on the website. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-4886, [www.colorado.gov/msd](http://www.colorado.gov/msd).
  - **Academy Water and Sanitation District board meeting**, Wed., **Jan. 19**, 6 p.m. Usually meets third Wed. Public can join the Skype meeting: <https://join.skype.com/PAcujKTn7Nrh>. Check the website for a link: <https://academywsd.colorado.gov/notices-and-alerts>, Wescott Fire Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Dr. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-0711, <https://academywsd.colorado.gov>.
  - **Palmer Lake Town Planning Commission meeting**, Wed., **Jan. 19**, 6 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-2953, [www.townofpalmerlake.com](http://www.townofpalmerlake.com).
  - **El Paso County Planning Commission meeting**, Thu., **Jan. 20**, 9 a.m. Regional Development Center, 2880 International Circle, Colo. Springs. Meetings are live streamed on the El Paso County News & Information Channel at <https://www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel>. Normally meets first & third Thu. (if required). Info: 719-520-6300, <https://planningdevelopment.elpasoco.com>.
  - **Triview Metropolitan District board meeting**, Thu., **Jan. 20**, 5:30 p.m., 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302, Monument. Normally meets third Thu. Info: 719-488-6868, [www.triviewmetro.com](http://www.triviewmetro.com).
  - **Donala Water & Sanitation District board meeting**, Thu., **Jan. 20**, 1:30 p.m., 15850 Holbein Dr. Meets third Thu. Check the website for the access code for the electronic meeting Thu. Info: 719-488-3603, [www.donalawater.org](http://www.donalawater.org).
  - **Lewis-Palmer School District 38 board meeting**, Mon., **Jan. 24**, 6-10 p.m., Learning Center, 146 Jefferson St., Monument. Normally meets

- third Mon. Livestream on the district's YouTube channel: [www.youtube.com/user/LPSDCommunity](http://www.youtube.com/user/LPSDCommunity), agenda and supporting documents at <https://go.boarddocs.com/co/lewispalmer/Board.nsf/vpublic>. Info: 719- 488-4700, [vwood@lewispalmer.org](mailto:vwood@lewispalmer.org), [www.lewispalmer.org](http://www.lewispalmer.org).
- **Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District board meeting**, Wed., **Jan. 26**, 6:30 p.m. Station 1, 18650 Highway 105, Zoom meeting. Find joining instructions at [www.tlmfire.org](http://www.tlmfire.org) or contact Jennifer Martin, 719-484-0911. Normally meets fourth Wed. Info: [www.tlmfire.org](http://www.tlmfire.org).
  - **Woodmoor Improvement Association board meeting**, Wed., **Jan. 26**, 7 p.m., Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. Meets fourth Wed. Info: 719-488-2693, [www.woodmoor.org](http://www.woodmoor.org).

WEEKLY & MONTHLY EVENTS

- **The Centering Prayer Group at Black Forest Community Church**, First **Sat.** of every month. 8:30-10 a.m. The Old Log Church. Centering prayer opens and closes the meetings with discussion and fellowship in between; open to all. Contact Rev. Roger Butts, 719-433-3135, for information.
- **Group of Artists (GOA), SUSPENDED**, Normally meets first Sat. 10 a.m.-noon, 304 Hwy. 105, Palmer Lake. Lively discussions about art topics, general studies on creativity. Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA) Info: 719-481-0475, [info@trilakesarts.org](mailto:info@trilakesarts.org). Additional information available on Facebook.
- **Monument Hill Kiwanis Club meeting**, every **Sat.**, 8 a.m. [www.MHKiwanis.org](http://www.MHKiwanis.org), [Monument-HillKiwanis@gmail.com](mailto:Monument-HillKiwanis@gmail.com) for details; 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 and women of the Tri-Lakes area who work together to make a difference for youth and our community. Info: RF Smith, 719-210-4987, [www.MHKiwanis.org](http://www.MHKiwanis.org).
- **Neighborhood Net**, every **Sat.**, 10 a.m. Amateur radio operators practice for emergencies on weekly repeater nets so neighbors can help neighbors. Sign up at [www.mereowx.org/neighborhood-net](http://www.mereowx.org/neighborhood-net) or [contactus@mereowx.org](mailto:contactus@mereowx.org).
- **The Wine Seller Free Wine Tastings**, every **Sat.**, 1-4 p.m., 2805 Roberts Dr., Monument. Info: 719-488-3019, [www.thewineseller.net](http://www.thewineseller.net).
- **Palmer Lake Art Group**. Second **Sat.**. A variety of art programs are offered after the social gathering and business meeting. Guests welcome. Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy. 105, Palmer Lake. Info: 719-460-4179, [www.palmerlakeartgroup.com](http://www.palmerlakeartgroup.com).
- **Lions Club Bingo**, Every **Sat.** (except the first Sat.), 8:30 a.m.- 1 p.m. and first **Mon.**, 5:30-10 p.m. Tri-Lakes Lions Club's portion of the proceeds benefit those in need in the Tri-Lakes community. Updated info and location: Jim Naylor, 719-481-8741 or [www.trilakeslionsclub.org](http://www.trilakeslionsclub.org).
- **Palmer Lake Historical Society**, **Sat.**, **Jan. 22**, 7 p.m. Monthly meetings are normally held every third Thu. at Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce Bldg.-Community Rm., 166 Second Street, Monument. Election of officers, no presentation or program. Info: 719-550-0837, [www.palmerdividehistory.org](http://www.palmerdividehistory.org).
- **Tri-Lakes Parkinson's Disease Support Group, SUSPENDED**, third Sat.; if you need any help, please call Syble or Barry. 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. Info: Syble Krafft, 719-488-2669; Barry (group president), 719-351-9485.
- **Faithful Friends discussion group**, usually third **Sat.**, 3-4:30 p.m. Wesley Owens Coffee. Sept. 18: Our women's discussion topic: "What is your forwarding address after that last heart-beat?" Info: Ellen, 303-526-5000 or Sandi, 719-237-3359. All ladies are welcome to our open discussion group.
- **Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church**, every **Sun.**, 8 and 11 a.m. traditional, 9:30 a.m. contemporary. Both in-person (no registration necessary) and livestream at [www.tlumc.org/live](http://www.tlumc.org/live). Watch live or on replay: [www.facebook.com/tlumc](https://www.facebook.com/tlumc), [www.youtube.com/tlumc](https://www.youtube.com/tlumc). Info: 719-488-1365, [www.tlumc.org](http://www.tlumc.org). 20256 Hunting Downs Way, Monument. See ad on page 2.

- **Fuel Church** Sunday Service, every **Sun.**, Connection 9:30-10 a.m. New Service times, 10:45 a.m. Live service streaming at [www.fuelchurch.org](http://www.fuelchurch.org) at 11:25 a.m., Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Nursery and kids' service. Non-denominational, spirit-filled. Need prayer? Email us [info@fuel.org](mailto:info@fuel.org). See ad on page 7.
- **Al-Anon Zoom Meeting**, Just for Today Online, every **Mon.**, 9 -10 a.m. Zoom Meeting ID: 889 4142 7446, password: 349309. Email: [justfortodayonline@gmail.com](mailto:justfortodayonline@gmail.com) for meeting password.
- **Women's A.A. Step Study**, every **Mon.**, 6:30 p.m., meeting remotely, check for details. Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 Baptist Rd. Park in west lot. Info: 866-641-9190.
- **Monument Life Recovery Group**, every **Mon.**, 6:30-7:30 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: 303-946-2659, [www.liferecoverygroups.com/meetings/life-recovery-group-3/](http://www.liferecoverygroups.com/meetings/life-recovery-group-3/).
- **Amateur Radio W0TLM** (Tri-Lakes Monument Radio Association), third **Mon.** All amateur radio operators or those interested in becoming one are welcome. Info: Joyce Witte, 719-661-9824, [Joycewitte@gmail.com](mailto:Joycewitte@gmail.com); [www.W0TLM.com](http://www.W0TLM.com).
- **Essentrics Fitness Program at Senior Center**, every **Tue.**, 9 a.m. & Thu. at 10 a.m., Lewis-Palmer High School modular building across from the YMCA, on Jackson Creek Pkwy. Registration & info: Sue Walker, 719-330-0241, [www.trilakes-seniors.org](http://www.trilakes-seniors.org).
- **GriefShare Support Group**, Meets the last **Tue.**, 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 and Hospice Care to host a 13-session grief support group in Monument. RSVP & info: Sue Walker, 719-330-0241.
- **Bingo by the American Legion**, every **Tue.** Game sales start at 5 p.m., games start at 6 p.m., the Depot Restaurant, Palmer Lake. Proceeds go to scholarships and other community support activities. Info: 719-488-8659, <http://legion-post9-11.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, <https://ppymca.org/locations/north/tri-lakes/tri-lakes/holly-brando>
- **Children's Literacy Center**, every **Tue. & Thu.**, 5:30-6:30 p.m. Provides free one-on-one literacy tutoring to Tri-Lakes children in grades 1-6 who are reading below grade level. Tutoring is at the Tri-Lakes Senior Center. For more information, to become a volunteer tutor, or to enroll your child, visit [www.childrensliteracycenter.org](http://www.childrensliteracycenter.org) or email Christine Jeffson at [Christine@childrensliteracycenter.org](mailto:Christine@childrensliteracycenter.org).
- **D-38 HomeSchool Enrichment Academy**, every **Tue. or Thu.** 2021-22 school year, for K-8 grade homeschooled students to cultivate a love of learning through explorations in art, music, PE, science, and more. [www.lewispalmer.org/hsea](http://www.lewispalmer.org/hsea).
- **Al-anon meeting**: Monument Serenity, every **Tue.**, 7:30-8:30 p.m., find online and phone meetings. Ascent Church (formerly the Tri-Lakes Chapel), 1750 Deer Creek Rd., Monument. Info: Kay, 719-481-9258, [www.al-anon-co.org](http://www.al-anon-co.org).
- **Senior Citizen Luncheons**, Connections Café sites, every **Wed.** 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. Food Pantry offers a "pick up only" model for clients. Mon.-Fri., noon-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 second Thu. Reservations are requested at 719-884 2300.
- **Colorado Springs Philharmonic Guild Listening Club**, third **Wed.** each month, free virtual event. Maestro Wilson will conduct monthly hour-long programs. RSVP at [www.cspguild.org](http://www.cspguild.org)
- **Gleneagle Sertoma**, first and third **Wed.**, 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. El Padrino, 13425 Voyager Pkwy.,



- Colorado Springs. The longest continuously serving civic service organization in northern El Paso County features a program speaker addressing local topics of interest. Duane Gritzmaker, [dwgritz@gmail.com](mailto:dwgritz@gmail.com) or 719-649-9220.
- **Senior Social**, fourth **Wed.**, 12455 Black Forest Rd. Info: [www.aarpchapter1100blackforest.weekly.com](http://www.aarpchapter1100blackforest.weekly.com).
  - **Tri-Lakes Church of Christ** Wednesday night fellowship classes, every **Wed.**, 6-7:30 p.m., 20450 Beacon Lite Road, Monument (corner of Beacon Lite & County Line Roads). Info: 719-488-9613, [gregsmith@trilakeschurch.org](mailto:gregsmith@trilakeschurch.org), [www.trilakeschurch.org](http://www.trilakeschurch.org).
  - **Kehilat**, Zoom Bible Study, every **Wed.**, 6:15 p.m. Bring your hungry and tired so they can be filled and more blessed. Ms. Williams, 719-453-6279.
  - **Tri-Lakes Cruisers**, first **Wed.**, 7 p.m. A non-profit car club. Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce community room, with numerous activities and events each month. Club membership applications are now being accepted and are available on the website: [www.tl-cruisers.weekly.com](http://www.tl-cruisers.weekly.com) on the "ABOUT" page.
  - **AARP Black Forest #1100**, second **Wed.**, **Jan. 12**, noon. All ages welcome. In person, Black Forest Lutheran Church, 12455 Black Forest Rd.
  - **Senior Bingo**, third **Wed.** Silver Alliance Senior Center, Lewis-Palmer High School campus. Masks required. Space is limited to 16 participants. RSVP & info: Sue Walker, 719-464-6873, or email [sue@monumentalfitness.com](mailto:sue@monumentalfitness.com).
  - **Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7829**, third **Wed.** via Zoom; POC Delbert Zehrung, 559-362-3223. 7 p.m., The Country Club at Woodmoor, 18945 Pebble Beach Way, Monument. New members welcome. Info: Post Commander Joe Carlson, 405-326-2588, [jcarlson@vfw7829.org](mailto:jcarlson@vfw7829.org), [www.vfw7829.org](http://www.vfw7829.org).
  - **VFW Auxiliary to Post 7829**, third **Wed.**, meeting by videoconference, 7 p.m., The Country Club at Woodmoor, 18945 Pebble Beach Way, Monument. Guests are welcome to join; contact [carlsonmkc@aol.com](mailto:carlsonmkc@aol.com) for instructions on how to connect. If you are a relative of a veteran who served on foreign soil during war or other military action, you may be eligible. Info: Kathy Carlson, 719-488-1902, [carlsonmkc@aol.com](mailto:carlsonmkc@aol.com).
  - **Al-Anon meeting**: Letting Go, every **Thu.**, 9-10:15 a.m. at Ascent Church, 1750 Deer Creek Rd., Monument. For additional information go to [www.al-anon-co.org](http://www.al-anon-co.org).
  - **Networking breakfast**, first and third **Thu.**, Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce in person or via Zoom 166 2nd Street Monument 7:30 - 9 a.m. free registration at [www.TriLakeschamber.com](http://www.TriLakeschamber.com).
  - **Fuel Church Griefshare**, every **Thu.**, 5:30-7:30 p.m. 643 State Highway 105, Palmer Lake. See ad on page 3.
  - **A.A. Big Book Study**, every **Thu.**, 7 p.m., Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 W. Baptist Rd. Call 425-436-6200, access code 575176#.
  - **Friends of Fox Run Park**, fourth **Thu.** Zoom meeting, 6-7 p.m., email [friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com](mailto:friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com), they will email you the link the day of the meeting. Join the growing group to learn about volunteering and supporting the park for safety, trails, trees, education, more. Info: [friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com](mailto:friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com).
  - **Bridge, SUSPENDED**, meets second **Thu.** Silver Alliance Senior Center, 1300 Higby Rd., Monument, Sept.-June Info: [www.blgc.org.html](http://www.blgc.org.html).
  - **Ben Lomond Gun Club, SUSPENDED**, second **Thu.**, Tri-Lakes Chapter. Info: <https://blgc.org>.
  - **Gleneagle Women's Club**, membership luncheon, third **Fri.**, June-Sept various venues, 12 activity groups, i.e., hiking, bridge, etc. Guests welcome. For information contact Sarah George 719-487-2985.
  - **Tri-Lakes Women's Club Monthly Luncheon**, **Fri.**, **Jan. 14**, 11 am-2 pm. Wedgewood Black Forest, 12375 Black Forest Rd. Meetings are open to all members of Tri-Lakes Women's Club. To become a member, or learn about the club, visit our

website at [www.tlwc.net](http://www.tlwc.net) or email [sleggie26@me.com](mailto:sleggie26@me.com).

- **Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS)**, every **Fri.**, 8 a.m., Monument Chamber of Commerce, 166 Second St., Monument. Info: Terry, 719-684-4912, or visit [www.TOPS.org](http://www.TOPS.org).
- **Silver Center Book Club**, second **Fri.**, 11 a.m.-noon, Senior Center across the street from Tri-Lakes YMCA, on Lewis-Palmer High School campus. All are welcome. Coffee & snacks served. RSVP & info: Sue, 719-330-0241.
- **Monumental Impact Open Builds**, every **Fri.**, 3-6 p.m. Bring your own technology, engineering, and/or entrepreneurial projects or just come for the comradery. Open to high school students and adults. 55 Adams St. Info: 719-387-7414, [enable@monumentalimpact.org](mailto:enable@monumentalimpact.org). Through fall 2021.

SPECIAL EVENTS

- **Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce**, Education Series, **Tue.**, **Jan. 18**, 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. "Telling Your Story," free in-person workshop. [www.trilakeschamber.com](http://www.trilakeschamber.com). 719-481-3282.
- **Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce**, After Hours Networking Event, **Tue.**, **Jan. 18**, 5 p.m.-7:00 p.m. Annual Non-Profit Night. Come meet some of our Non-Profit Members and see how you can get involved with them. Free for chamber members, \$15 for non-members. [www.trilakeschamber.com](http://www.trilakeschamber.com). 719-481-3282.
- **Pikes Peak Brewing Company**, free gift cards with merchandise or gift card purchase through **Dec. 24**. Pikes Peak Brewing.com. See ad on page 13.
- **A Better Hearing Center**, special offers, through **Jan. 31**. 574 Hwy. 105, Monument. See ad on page 13.
- **Cornerstone Cleaners**, 10% off alterations through **Jan. 31**. 1030 W. Baptist Road, near King Soopers. See ad on page 4.
- **Eagle Wine & Spirits**, special offers through **Jan. 31**. Baptist Road next to King Soopers. See ad on page 3.
- **Monumental Med-Spa**, special offers through **Jan. 31**. At the Loft, 4 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. See ad on page 7.
- **Monument Cleaners**, special offers through **Jan. 31**. 15932 Jackson Creek Pkwy., in Monument Marketplace. See ad on page 5.
- **Noel Relief Centers**, complimentary first visit through **Jan. 31**. 1840 Woodmoor Drive, Suite 109, Monument. See ad on page 2.
- **Pure Romance** by Amy Yocum-vos, special offers through **Jan. 31**. [www.pureromance.com/AmyYocum-vos](http://www.pureromance.com/AmyYocum-vos). See ad on page 4.
- **The Living Room plants**, special offers through **Jan. 31**. 12229 Voyager Pkwy, Suite 100,. See ad on page 5.
- **YMCA**, special offers through **Jan. 31**. See ad on page 6.
- **McCord Landscaping**, special offer through

Content

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

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

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

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

**Feb. 1.** See ad on page 5.

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

Letters to Our Community

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

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

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

Look for our next issue  
**Saturday, Feb. 5**

**Ad space reservations due: Fri., Jan. 14**  
**Finished ad artwork due: Fri., Jan. 21**  
**Letters to the editor due: Fri., Jan. 21**  
**Calendar items due: Fri., Jan. 28**

Visit our website to read, download, and search all the back issues at  
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