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Issue #260 — Volume 22 Number 11 — Saturday, November 5, 2022

## **OCN** needs your help! See page 29

## **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.

- **Black Forest Arts and Crafts** Guild 58th annual Fall arts and crafts show, Wed.-Sun., Nov. 2-6
- Holiday boutique & Bake sale, St Peter Catholic Church Sat., Nov. **12**, 9 am-3 pm. See ad on page 2.
- Palmer Lake Historical Society, Thu., Nov. 17; doors open 6:30, 7:00 pm meeting. Honoring veterans, Jim Sawatzki will present his film, The Life and Times of General William Jackson Palmer
- Tri-Lakes Women's Club, Joys of the Season holiday home tour, Fri.-Sat. Nov. 18-19, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. See ad on page 2.
- Bearbotics' MITEE Gobble Squabble, Sat, Nov. 19, 10-2pm. See ad on page 6.
- YMCA 5K race series, one great cause.Turkey Trot Thu., Nov. 24. See ad on page 6.
- Small business Saturday, Sat., Nov. 26, historic downtown Monument. See ad on page 11.
- Alpaca holiday extravaganza, Sat.-Sun., **Nov. 26-27**. Sat 9 am - 5 pm, Sun. 10 am-4 pm. See ad on page 7
- Monument Hill Kiwanis Club 16th Annual North Pole at Tri-Lakes Arts and Crafts Fair. Sat, **Dec, 3**, 9-4pm. See ad on page 16.
- Our Community News mailing day, Thu., Dec. 1, approx. 9 am-2 pm. Information on page 29.

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#### Circulation

Print Run: 22,420 Mail Delivery: 21,730 Stacks: 690

## Military appreciation at LP



Above: On Oct. 22, the Lewis-Palmer Rangers met Pueblo Central in a military appreciation football game to raise funds for a military charity. Lewis-Palmer fell in defeat to Pueblo Central 39-8. In conjunction with the game, the Air Force Wings of Blue skydivers descended on Don Breese Stadium in Monument. Photo by Creighton Smith.

Monument Board of Trustees, Oct. 17

## Planning director hired; multifamily apartments approved following changes to the plans

By Chris Jeub

While the Monument Board of Trustees usually meets twice per month, it cancelled its Oct. 3 meeting to dedicate time to a workshop to cover communication expectations for town staff. The Oct. 17 meeting started with Town Manager Mike Foreman announcing that a new planning director had been hired: Sheila Booth. She comes with over 20 years of experience working in cities such as Frisco and Plano, Texas, and recently in the city of Fountain where she was the mentor to its planning director. She comes from the American Planning Association as its chapter administrator for Colorado. She began employment for Monument on Oct. 31.

#### Multifamily apartments along **Jackson Creek Parkway**

The BOT passed Ordinance No. 18-2022, approving a Preliminary/Final Planned

Unit Development for Monument Junction West, Lot 5. Though the Planning Commission declined the ordinance the week prior by a vote of 4-3, the trustees passed the ordinance 5-2 following presentations from the town staff and the applicant, responses from several community members, and rebuttals from the applicant and its CEO.

#### **Presentations**

Interim Planner Shawn Snow presented a summary of the current proposal. Lot 5 of Monument Junction West is south of the intersection of State Highway 105 and Jackson Creek Parkway. Four commercial lots will be to its north, single-family units to its south, and I-25 to its west. This multifamily sketch plan was approved unanimously by the trustees on June 15, 2020, with the final plat approved Feb. 7, 2022. The plan contains 264 multifamily units on 10.687 acres-half one-bedroom and half twobedroom-in 11 apartment buildings no more than 44 feet in height. A clubhouse, a pool, and tenant storage as well as a 3.4acre park are included.

Andrea Barlow of N.E.S. presented on behalf of the applicant. She emphasized how the original sketch plan had 20 percent more residential units than the resulting final Planned Unit Development (PUD). She also emphasized how the current plan is below maximum density (24.7 vs. 25), is below maximum height (43 of 50 feet maximum) and provides more parking spaces than is required (399 spaces where 376 is required). Easements, too, exceeded requirements.

Barlow referenced a meeting the developer had the week prior with Save Monument where many of the concerns were about setbacks claimed to be as little as 15

**MONUMENT (Cont. on 2)** 

Monument Academy School Board, Oct. 6, 13, and 25

## **Board approves joint resolution** with D38 on MLO

By Jackie Burhans

The Monument Academy (MA) School Board held a town hall on Oct. 13 to hear from district leadership and propose a joint resolution supporting the district mill levy override (MLO) ballot issue 4A. At its regular meeting on Oct. 6, the board swore in a new member and heard public comments on the MLO. Finally, the board held a special meeting on Oct. 25 to select consultants for MA's modulars and for assistance with selecting a new chief operating officer.

#### Joint resolution follows town hall on D38 MLO

At the Oct. 6 regular meeting, the board heard public comments for and against the district MLO ballot issue before going into executive session in part to "discuss negotiations and advice to negotiators regarding district MLO and charter contract ques-

The board called a special meeting on Oct. 13 at 6 p.m. to go into executive session "to discuss negotiations and advice to negotiators regarding district MLO and charter contract questions."

The board reconvened at 6:30 p.m. and the D38 leadership team of Superintendent KC Somers, Chief Business Officer Brett Ridgway, and D38 board President Chris Taylor made a short presentation about the mill levy override that will be on the November ballot asking for 7.45 mills "expressly and solely" for "increasing compensation for teachers and non-administrative staff

MA (Cont. on 5)

#### **MONUMENT (Cont. from 1)**

feet. Barlow showed slides of how the final PUD setback is 45 feet and exceeds all setback requirements. Referencing discussion from the Save Monument meeting, Barlow included the impact on mountain views, showing how this PUD is 25 percent of the

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Monument Junction frontage on the west side of Jackson Creek, and that the apartments are on the curve of the parkway. Traffic, too, was a concern, and Barlow showed how the developments along Jackson Creek Parkway and the new entrances would alleviate concerns. Barlow clarified what she said was the Planning Commission's confu-

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sion over "affordable" housing; this is called a "more affordable housing alternative" with a "mix of housing options." These are "garden apartments" that are consistent with the town's Comprehensive Plan.

Barlow specifically addressed the Planning Commission's rejection of the plan as "disingenuous" since it originally voted for approval of the sketch plan. Even so, after several discussions with the Save Monument group, Barlow shared that the applicant has agreed to remove one building from the Jackson Creek development, a total reduction of 24 units from the total (264 to 240 units).

Before taking questions from the trustees, Barlow listed the criteria to justify passing this ordinance:

- The PUD is consistent with the mixed use land use designation in the town's Comprehensive Plan.
- The PUD is consistent with the multifamily land use designation and maximum density allowed on the approved sketch plan.
- An appropriate relationship exists between use areas, both internal and surrounding, with adequate buffer areas provided.
- The master developer will construct the improvements at State Highway

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105 and Jackson Creek Parkway and the section of Jackson Creek Parkway from the northern full-movement intersection of the project to State Highway 105 to "the ultimate condition."

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#### **Questions from trustees**

Trustee Redmond Ramos wondered why the applicant wouldn't remove all multifamily units, asking, "Why not just listen to what the citizens want?" Barlow explained that the sketch plan was approved, and that Save Monument was not necessarily against multifamily housing but more concerned with design.

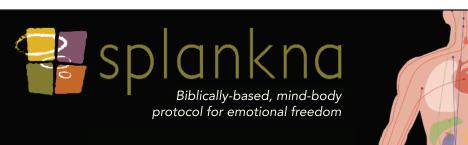
Trustee Ron Stephens asked about water and the proposed swimming pool, and Barlow explained water agreements have been reached for this development.

Trustee Darcy Schoening asked about the removal of Building 2, reducing the mountain views, and Barlow explained that its removal would add to the vista view.

Trustee Mitch LaKind asked for the buildings to be moved back from Jackson Creek Parkway, but Barlow said they could not be pinched back any further, that the removal of Building 2 was the best compromise. LaKind then asked why the developer didn't minimize their density rather than maximize it, and Barlow reiterated that there was a 20 percent reduction from the original density and that if the trustees wanted a different density range, that should have been requested in the sketch

Doug Stimple, CEO of Classic Homes, took the podium to answer questions on the timeline. He said that since the market has changed so much in the last six months, it's tough to give an exact timeline. He said. "When we bought this ground, it was zoned for multifamily." He took issue with Trustee Ramos' suggestion to "just listen to the community," arguing that "that's not the role of the community" and that "when this got processed, this wasn't controversial; there was one letter of opposition-one, that was it!" Stimple emphasized that they have been playing within what is allowed. After Mayor Don Wilson asked about the road timeline, Stimple explained that Classic Homes worked with the town to post two \$2.6 million bonds to support improvements to Jackson Creek Parkway and State Highway 105.





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Schoening referenced zoning changes and density cap discussions from previous meetings but emphasized that "we can't do that now; now is not the time." Mayor Wilson followed, "I completely agree with that."

#### **Public comments**

A total of 14 public comments were made in response to the presentations, most of which challenged the ordinance. Some took issue with the developers, accusing them of "bait and switch" between the sketch plan and the final PUD. Others challenged the trustees to stick to the comprehensive plan or come up with a "win-win" solution with the applicant and the community. Water issues, traffic, blocked views, light pollution, impact on schools, a call for a moratorium, and other issues were brought up from other community members. "The majority of the people do not want this," one commenter claimed. "Do they [the developers] care? No. And they never will."

Two comments supported the ordinance. One came from Steve King of the Save Monument group, who started his comment by attempting to clear the record, "I am that person who wrote that one letter [of opposition]." He commended Classic Homes for sacrificing one of their 11 apartment buildings, saying he was "super happy" that the developers were willing to compromise. He emphasized that he was not prepared for such an offer. "This is catching me off guard," he said, "so I don't have any answers right

Another comment came from William Tamminga, owner of BurgerWorks. "I own the prop-

erty [north of Lot 4] and am a stakeholder in the community," he said, "and I am excited about the masterfully planned project with Classic Homes." Tamminga shared that Classic Homes did not ask him to speak on their behalf, but he felt the need to speak up. "I think it's really cool that they [Classic Homes] found a compromise with people who disagreed with them."

#### **Applicant rebuttal**

Barlow responded in general by saying they had neighborhood meetings with residents through the sketch plan process, and not one expressed concern for multifamily residences. "The purpose of the sketch plan review is if it conforms to the comprehensive plan," to which she claimed the sketch plan had hardly changed. "There has been no bait-and-switch," she said, emphasizing again the reduced number of units and adjustments to density, buffers, and setbacks.

Specific rebuttals included the applicant's emphasis on all existing and future residents. The traffic study by town engineers addresses future traffic issues on Jackson Creek Parkway. Additional access to Knollwood is now part of the plan, "a clear benefit to the town of Monument." She also responded to issues concerning impacts to schools, lighting, and protected mouse habitat.

Stimple took the podium again, saying, "We really regret being in this position." He claimed Classic Homes bought this land with an approved sketch plan with no objections. "The implication in all these comments is that somehow we don't care," which he said was unfair. Stimple closed by em-

phasizing the plan meets all the criteria of the town.

#### **Board comments**

Trustee Ramos asked interim town lawyer Anthony Rivera, "Are we allowed to make changes to components of a final plan?" Rivera responded that trustees can "approve, approve with conditions, or deny." Ramos followed by claiming trustees should not approve a plan without seeing an image "that is not here" (referencing the removal of Building 2). Ramos also read from previous trustee meeting minutes citing opposition earlier in the planning process. "We were specifically told there was no opposition, but the minutes show there were many concerns."

Trustee Schoening claimed the situation was because of a flawed system and out-of-date codes. "Developers are working



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within parameters that are not up to speed with what citizens are asking for," she said. Trustee LaKind claimed that, at first, he thought the development was "cool," but that he wished the plan hadn't changed.

Mayor Pro Tem Kelly Elliott complained of the timing of concerns. "I'm surprised that an extrustee is bringing concerns now when he should know when to bring concerns," she said, claiming Classic Homes has been "extremely professional and attention to detail exceptional."

Mayor Wilson expressed hesitancy to postpone to merely delete one building and proposed instead to vote with an added condition. Ramos responded, "I fundamentally disagree" with claims the final plan was very different from the sketch plan. "We have to listen to the town," he said. "I've been emailed time and time



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again about how we feel tricked."

Stephens motioned to table the plan until it could be represented in a more accurate manner, coming back later after discussing the changes. He expressed concern that "the town could be accused of bait-and-switch." The mo-

Ramos followed by saying he didn't want to waste everyone's time. "If the only change is the removal of the building, I would still vote 'no." He then motioned to deny Monument Junction West, Lot 5. This motion, likewise,

Trustee Jim Romanello then motioned to approve with the modification to remove Building 2 and replace it with adequate landscaping and no other changes. The motion passed 5-2 with Ramos and LaKind dissenting. LaKind added that he believed the setbacks do not align with the town's comprehensive plan.

Ramos asked Rivera if trustees who receive funds from an applicant should recuse themselves. Rivera replied only for "contribution to the person," which does not include political contributions.

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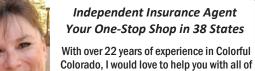
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#### Whataburger coming to town

The BOT passed Ordinance No. 19-2022, approving a Preliminary/Final PUD for BurgerWorks, developer for Whataburger Restaurant, by a vote of 7-0.

Barlow of N.E.S. presented the final PUD of the 1.79 acres, a larger lot than other Whataburger lots in Colorado Springs. She addressed traffic concerns for the opening week. This will be the seventh opening in the area, so traffic should not be nearly as large of a concern as when the first Whataburger opened on Voyager Parkway, the first of the Texas chain of restaurants to open in Colorado.

Ramos asked Monument Chief of Police Sean Hemingway if security will be ready for the opening. Hemingway responded with the desire to have an officer-as opposed to a hired security officer—on duty during at least the opening week. LaKind noted the 24-hour operation of the restaurant, asking how light ordinances will be followed. The applicant said that all dark-sky ordinances were followed in the plan. Ramos expressed that "everyone wants Whataburger," citing the only concerns he received from citizens were about traffic.

#### Items not on the agenda

Public comments not on the agenda were from two residents in favor of the mill levy override (MLO) on the Nov. 8 ballot for School District 38. Stephanie Markle, a Palmer Ridge High School (PRHS) employee and former PRHS student, expressed how important it was for her to have an incredibly talented teacher when she was young. She fears without the MLO we will likely not prepare our students with qualified teachers. "We are the lowest-funded district in our region," she said, "and this MLO brings us to average." Jackie Burhans, a resident of the area for 30 years, expressed that Monument is blessed with a wide range of choices in D38. "The glue that holds us together is the teachers and staff," she said. "They have long been undervalued and underpaid."

Rivera announced his departure as interim town attorney but requested to stay long enough to help train the new lawyer. Stephens called for a resolution to condemn the vote on recreational marijuana in neighboring towns of Palmer Lake and Colorado Springs but found no support to advance it. Ramos and Schoening, while claiming they would not support recreational marijuana in Monument, specifically said it was not the place for the BOT to impose their opinions on neighboring towns.

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 two regular meetings are scheduled for Monday, Nov. 7 and Monday, Nov. 21. Call 719-884-8014 or see www.townofmonument.org for information. To see upcoming agendas and complete board packets for BOT or to download audio recordings of past meetings, see http://monumenttownco. minutesondemand.com and click on Board of Trustees.

Chris Jeub can be reached at chrisjeub@ocn.me.

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Above: At the MA/D38 Town Hall Oct. 13, D38 Superintendent KC Somers, Chief Business Officer (CBO) Brett Ridgway, and D38 Board President Chris Taylor presented information about ballot issue 4A, a mill levy override solely and expressly to increase the compensation of teachers and support staff. The MLO would raise about \$5.6 million total of which about \$1 million would go to MA to use for the same purpose. The MA board and community asked questions and made comments about the MLO. The board voted unanimously to propose a joint resolution with D38 on supporting the MLO and defining the terms under which the MLO money would be shared with MA. The D38 board unanimously approved the resolution at a special meeting on Oct. 17. From left are MA board members Craig Carle, Lindsay Clinton, Board President Ryan Graham, and board members Emily Belisle and Michael Geers are seated next to Somers, CBO Brett Ridgway, and Taylor. Photo by Jackie Burhans.

#### MA (Cont. from 1)

throughout the district, including Monument Academy." A "town hall"-style question-and-answer period followed with attendees and MA board members making comments and/or asking questions that were fielded by the D38 leadership team.

At the conclusion of the town hall, the MA board voted unanimously to propose a joint resolution between MA and D38 on the 2022 MLO stating that:

MA would receive 100% of its portion of the MLO money based on the proportion of district students they serve, including students who choose to come into the district. Note: The law requires D38 to dis-

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719-270-1074 556 HWY 105, MONUMENT 80132 2) D38 will agree in advance to MA's plan for use of the money so long as it fully complies with the ballot lan-



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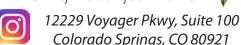
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guage for increasing teacher and non-administrative staff compensation. The district will not require MA to submit audits or reports beyond what the state law requires.

- MA will have a proportional representation on the Citizen Oversight Committee that will track and report the use of the money.
- Upon D38's ratification of this joint resolution, the MA board will publicly support the 2022 MLO.

The D38 Board of Education called a special virtual meeting for Monday, Oct. 17, at 7 a.m. and unanimously adopted the joint resolution.

#### **Consultants selected**

At its Oct. 25 special meeting, the board went into executive session to receive legal advice on specific legal matters in-

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cluding financial topics, for personnel matters related to the COO search, and for negotiations and advice to negotiators regarding property and facility improvement matters.

The board unanimously voted to move forward with Meyer Innovations LLC to complete needed infrastructures for East Campus modulars.

The board also unanimously voted to authorize the COO search subcommittee to research and engage a consultant to help with the operational affairs of Monument Academy.

#### **Highlights**

Board meeting highlights include:

- New board member Michael Geers was sworn in as the newest member of the MA board.
- The board spotlighted teachers Cristin Patterson and Zach Engelman for stepping up when the East Campus representative no longer worked at MA, attending the board meetings and coordinating with the West Campus representative to keep everyone updated.
- Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Marc Brocklehurst reported as both interim COO and as CFO. MA has received two proposals for municipal financial advisors as they move forward with Phase 2 funding of MA's East Campus but will wait to select a candidate after the MLO vote.
- Brocklehurst reported that MA has finalized the selection of an appraiser for their West Campus property as part of the Highway 105 project. They also heard the results of an environmental review that their recirculation plan would have minimal impact on the Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse habitat.
- Board member Lindsay Clinton reminded parents that it is important to log volunteer hours as grant applications often request information about community engagement.
- The MA board unanimously adopted the updated employee handbook as well as the Unified Improvement Plans (UIP) for both the East and West campuses. The board also postponed voting on the memorandum of understanding with Leading Edge for before and after care until its November meeting.





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- The boards set its fall retreat for Oct 21 and discussed the next board community chat.
- After the executive session on Oct. 6, Carle said the board had been noti-

fied of egregious behavior and close calls, and was working on a plan of action, including possibly revoking the carline privileges of violators.

The MA School Board meets at 6 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. The next regular board meeting will be on Thursday, Nov. 10, at 6 p.m. on the East Campus. See more information at see https://bit.ly/ma-

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

Lewis-Palmer District 38 Board of Education, Oct. 24

## **Board receives Monument** Academy annual report, **Unified Improvement Plan**

By Harriet Halbig

The D38 Board of Education discussed a number of significant subjects at its Oct. 24 meeting, including the annual report of the Monument Academy (MA) charter school, the district Unified Improvement Plan which was to be submitted to the state Department of Education, matters of public comment in meetings, and a resolution to oppose state Proposition 122.

#### **Monument Academy** annual report

Chief Financial Officer Marc Brocklehurst and MA Board President Ryan Graham presented the annual report on the 2021-22 school year.

The unified improvement plans (UIPs) for MA were separated into two segments,

grades 3 to 5 and grades 6 to 10. Many parents opted out of participation in state assessments for their students, but participation in the PSAT test was high. Sophomores scored slightly below the D38 average and freshmen slightly above.

Middle school math was mentioned as needing improvement. Reading assessments showed significant growth in grades K-5 except for fifth grade.

The current enrollment for grades K through 10 is 1,168, including 76 in preschool and 20 in kindergarten. There are 67 students identified as gifted, 76 exceptional students, and 42 English language learners.

## November Specials:

- Botox Event: November 17th 10am-6pm. Botox only \$11/unit! Must RSVP to reserve your spot!
- Neck Package \$700: Co2 Laser Neck PLUS Free Neck Correct Cream. (Savings of \$235)
- Madonna Eye Lift \$600 : Co2 Eye Treatment PLUS Free TNS Eye Repair (Savings of \$210)
- Got a turkey neck?? Kybella \$1000 (Savings of
- · HUGE Black Friday Sale!! Check our website and social media for details!

November Specials

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#### Alpaca Holiday Extravaganza The east campus is nearing its capacity, and planning has begun for phase 2 of construction that will include several class-

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#### Mark Your Calendar

Saturday, Nov. 26 from 9AM to 5PM Sunday, Nov. 27 from 10AM to 4PM

Black Forest Community Club is located at 12350 Black Forest Rd. just north of Shoup Rd. For latest information see our web page at http://secab-extravaganza.weebly.com/ or call 719-330-7349



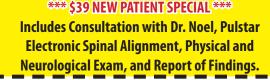
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rooms, a full-size gymnasium, and a playing field. In the meantime, it may be necessary to use modular classrooms when grade 10 is added in the school year of 2022-23.

Brocklehurst listed participation of MA in various athletic activities at the middle and high school levels and said it would apply for membership in the Colorado High School Athletic Association in January 2023.

To view the entire presentation, please see boarddocs in the Board of Education tab on the lewispalmer.org website

#### **District Unified Improvement Plan**

Assistant Superintendent Amber Whetstine presented the district Unified Improvement Plan for the 2021-22 school year. The district has a performance framework due to its strong performance in the past and therefore provides a UIP every two years. This year the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) has begun to require submission of the document in October rather than the following spring.

This year for the first time, the UIP was aligned with the district's strategic plan, the first goal of which is to provide a safe and welcoming environment, the second is to provide a world class education, and the third is to care for the staff by supporting robust professional development and sufficient compensation.

To view the UIP in detail, please see boarddocs. The UIP for each school outlines areas in need of support, plans to remedy the deficiencies, and sources of funding to support actions.

The District Accountability Advisory Committee reviewed the document at its Oct. 11 meeting and made some suggestions such as implementing a parent survey, informing families about how Professional Development Days were being spent, and celebrating and elevating alternative pathways at the high school level to a greater extent.

The board voted to submit the UIP to the CDE as pre-





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- Keep Monument's water supply and wastewater treatment at healthy levels to support the town
- Supports responsible growth of Monument (comprehensive plan)
- Back the Blue, Support Our Military, and 2nd Amendment Rights
- The Right to Religious Freedom and Conscience

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4th Judicial District DA Michael Allen HD-19 State Representative Tim Geitner

Monument Mayor Don Wilson

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## Proposed change in public participation policy

At present, any individual wishing to address the board can sign up in the meeting room by 5 p.m. on the evening of the meeting or can email comments to the board to be read at the meeting.

The proposed changes to the policy would require individuals to email their intent to address the board no later than noon on the day of the meeting and supply their name, their affiliation, which would prove eligibility (student, parent, resident of district, etc.), and provide a street address, telephone number, email address, and the subject they wish to address.

A lengthy discussion followed. Some concerns were that not everyone has access to a computer, lead time was insufficient to study the boarddocs ahead of a meeting and decide to comment, and the board would unnecessarily limit participation.

Superintendent KC Somers commented that this board has performed well in ensuring that all discussion is respectful and civil, but some neighboring districts have reported that outside individuals have attended and disrupted their meetings. This proposal would ensure that those who speak have a right to do so as stakeholders in the district.

Board Secretary Tiffiney Upchurch commented that some individuals who own businesses in the district reside elsewhere but should have a voice.

Board President Chris Taylor and Director Matthew Clawson opposed the idea of excluding people from commenting. Treasurer Ron Schwarz asked if it is legal to require that those commenting have to be constituents and prove the fact.

Somers said that the board has a right to do whatever it thinks necessary.

The board accepted this first reading of the policy change and did not take a vote.

## Resolution regarding state Proposition 122 Colorado Proposition 122 would classify certain psychedelic plants and fungi as natural medicines and approve their use by adults.

Upchurch proposed that the board pass a resolution to oppose Proposition 122 in keeping with the strategic plan goal number 1 to provide a safe environment for all students. She stressed that the proposition does not allow local

jurisdictions to deny sale of these substances.

Upchurch said that the district will not actively campaign against the proposition but thinks this to be an important issue to address.

Other board members expressed reluctance to vote on a political issue. In the past, the district has voted on such local issues as a local drug rehabilitation center near a school, but never on a statewide issue.

Clawson felt that this action would set a bad precedent. He also asked for more time to study the issue. Board Vice President Theresa Phillips agreed that more time was needed.

The board voted to delay a vote until its Nov. 1 special meeting.  $\!\!\!$ 

#### Joint resolution on 4A mill levy override

At a special meeting on Oct. 14, members of the Monument Academy Board and the D38 Board of Education passed a joint resolution confirming the fact that proceeds of the mill levy override, if passed, would be shared with Monument Academy in proportion with its student population, which is currently about 20% of the district.

Both boards passed the resolution that with this understanding MA would support 4A.

#### Superintendent update

Somers recognized October as Principal Appreciation Month and presented gift books to all principals in attendance and thanked them for their service. He especially recognized Peggy Parsley, principal of Bear Creek Elementary, for her 27 years of service, 16 as principal of the largest elementary school in the state. Also recognized was Jenny Day, former principal of Lewis-Palmer Elementary, who was employed by the district for 22 years and is leaving for a career at Ent Credit Union.

He also congratulated Lewis-Palmer Middle School employee Josefina Ramos for achieving American citizenship.

Somers outlined student achievements in athletics and music and promoted the two upcoming high school musicals

He also praised the new construction program at the high school level, taught by Nate Strycker, Engineering and Design Technology teacher at Palmer Ridge and Andy Vrieze, Industrial and Engineering Technology teacher at Lewis-Palmer High School. The LPHS program leads to formal certification. The current project for the program is the renovation of the former senior center modular on the LPHS property.

Public comment on Nextdoor is entirely favorable, stressing that these skills are useful to all.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Lewis-Palmer D 38 Board of Education usually meets at 6 p.m. on the third Monday of the month in the district's learning center, 146 Jefferson St., Monument. The next regular meeting is on Nov. 14 due to the Thanksgiving break. Harriet Halbig can be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me.

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D38 Parent and Community (formerly District Accountability) Advisory Committee, Oct. 11

## Committee votes to change name, include new subcommittees

By Harriet Halbig

The District Accountability Advisory Committee voted to change its bylaws at its Oct. 11 meeting in order to change the name of the group and add two new subcom-

In an effort to increase community participation, the group will now be called the D38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee. The Colorado Department of Education requires that all school districts have an advisory committee.

The two new subcommittees are the Financial Advisory Committee (FAC) and the Wellness Committee.

#### **School introduction**

Principal Seann O'Connor welcomed the committee and gave a brief overview of Lewis-Palmer Middle School.

The student population decreased during the pandemic and now stands at 374 seventh-grade students and 414 eighth-graders. The school has recently shifted from a teaming model to a department model in an effort to improve assessment scores.

Committee members asked about teacher turnover at the school, and O'Connor explained ways the school is working around the shortage of staff.

#### **Board of Education** update

Board liaison Tiffiney Upchurch reported on recent board activity.

The board resolved in 2018 to share mill levy override funds from the 1999 MLO with Monument Academy (MA) in proportion to their population, which is now about 20% of the district. At a special meeting of the MA and district boards, a resolution was passed to confirm that the same procedure will be applied to the new MLO, should it pass in November. With this understanding, the MA board will support passage of 4A on the November bal-

Upchurch also introduced a property tax calculator which would indicate how much the MLO would cost a household based on the property's value.

The board submitted three resolutions to the Colorado Association of School Boards for consideration during the upcoming legislative season. All were accepted. The subjects were the buyback of the budget sta-

Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, Oct. 13 and 27

## Water **Fund and** municipal code prove contentious

By James Howald and

Jackie Burhans Two issues of long-standing concern to residents of Palmer Lake returned to center stage in October: how to manage the town's water and how to update the town's municipal code. New police officers were sworn in and the board recognized Officer James Bentley and the team that refurbished Palmer Lake's Town Hall. A draft of the 2023 budget

bilization factor, local control to schools over the use of state funds (at present many grants require a certain use), and local control over curriculum.

#### Unified

#### **Improvement Plan**

Assistant Superintendent Amber Whetstine presented the Unified Improvement Plan for the 2021-22 school year.

Committee members were invited to suggest how the district's strategic plan could be implemented to improve the district's support of students and teachers and encourage community involvement.

Priority 1 of the strategic plan is to create a safe and welcoming environment in the schools. Committee members suggested that the district educate parents more thoroughly on social and emotional aspects of instruction and try to advertise opportunities for community participation in the district.

suggestion was Another to improve follow-through on the Multi-tiered System of Support and continue the program through the secondary schools. Trusted adult training for teachers was also suggested.

Priority 2 involves offering high-quality instruction. Committee members suggested that the district explain to parents how Professional Learning Community time is spent when the schools are closed.

It was suggested that the district celebrate individuals who choose alternate pathways after graduation and consider what success would look like for them. Informing parents more thoroughly about assessments would also be useful.

Priority 3 values the district's people and commits to continuous growth. It was suggested that training time and mentor meetings should be scheduled and that the district should listen more to teacher feedback. Increased collaboration between sixth-grade teachers and middle school teachers was also encouraged.

For more detailed information on the Unified Improvement Plans for the district and individual schools, please see the Board of Education article on page 7.

#### **Subcommittee reports**

The Gifted Education Leadership Team held its first meeting and reported that D38 does well in identifying students who require gifted education programs. Ten percent of the district's student population is identified as gifted.

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) held its first meeting and found it challenging to increase participation. It was found that offering a virtual option for attendance increased participation, so in the future even meetings held in person will offer the virtual option for participation.

SEAC is working on bringing Trauma Informed Education to district classrooms.

The Wellness Committee had its first meeting and will focus on providing a triannual update to the state Department of Educa-

The Financial Advisory Committee held its first meeting and discussed the impact of the mill levy override should it pass in November.

\*\*\*\*\*

The D38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee meets six times a year. Locations vary. The next meeting will be on Nov. 15 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Monument Academy East Campus, 4303 Pinehurst Circle, Colorado

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





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was presented to the board and to the public at a workshop meeting. The board voted on eight resolutions and granted two special event permits.

#### **Water Fund scrutinized**

In a public comment at the Oct. 13 board meeting, resident Martha Brodzik drew attention to the town's Water Fund. She said residents had been misled by the discussion of the town's ballot initiatives because the town's largest financial problem is its Water Fund, which should be self-sustaining but is not. She argued the fund is over \$2 million in debt, is not properly managed, is behind in implementing rate increases, and that neither of the proposed ballot measures would solve these problems. She repeated her concerns at the budget workshop meeting that followed the board meeting.

At the Oct. 27 board meeting, in response to Brodzik's assessment and questions from other residents, Town Administrator Dawn Collins and Deputy Town Clerk Julia Stambaugh presented the history of the increases to the town's water rates and the current state of the loan obligations incurred by upgrades to its water infrastructure

Collins said her investigation showed there were no concerns about the Water Fund. She pointed out that incorrect water billing and water rates came before the board at three board meetings in January and February of 2021. At a board meeting on Feb. 25, 2021, staff told the board that loan payments were on track at that time but funding for loan payments would be

short by 2024 without implementing rate increases that were approved by a previous board in 2019. At that meeting, the board approved increased tap fees and increasing the base water rate and usage tier rates by 3% annually.

On April 11, 2019 a previous board approved rate increases recommended by Carl Brown of Getting Great Rates LLC. Details on Brown's presentation to the board can be found here: https://www.ocn.me/v19n4.htm#pltc and Resolution 4-2019, which put those rates into effect, can be found here: https://www.townofpalmerlake.com/resolutions?page=5.

Collins detailed the fee increases that were missed:

- Larger tap sizes were charged at the same rates as quarter-inch taps until March 2021. The accounts undercharged have been corrected.
- The usage rate increase approved in April 2021 was implemented 14 months late.
- Because of the delay in increasing the usage rate, water revenue has a deficit to recover.
- An additional two-month delay in raising rates resulted from changing billing providers.

Collins said that a 7 percent increase in water rates in 2023 is needed to recover the revenue lost due to the delays.

Collins stressed the new billing system provided more accurate and detailed data about water usage. She also told the board the Rural Community Assistance Corp. will analyze the current water rates and do a

five-year forecast that will cover the Water Fund including equipment and asset replacement schedules at no charge to the town.

Stambaugh said she had asked the Colorado Water Resources and Power Development Authority, from which Palmer Lake borrowed money to build a second water storage tank, to audit the town's loan. A quick review on the loan was done and the loan is "in great shape," according to the authority.

Trustee Darin Dawson emphasized that water rates will need to increase "for a very long time."

#### Recodification effort stalls again

Collins provided a brief history of the effort to recodify the town's municipal code. Previous boards and staff have been working since 2016 to update the town's municipal code with all newly passed ordinances. The original municipal code is in one document, and subsequent ordinances are in a separate document. Recodification involves integrating all adopted ordinances into the municipal code and then reviewing the result for legal accuracy and consistency.

Collins emphasized that at present the town staff was hindered in their duties because understanding the current code requires them first to review the municipal code and then to comb through the ordinances to find any that update the code on the issue they are trying to understand. As a result, residents can't always get a timely answer to their questions or concerns.

Collins said the board had directed

staff to hire Municode in March 2021 to integrate the existing municipal code with new ordinances into one easily searchable document and host that document on their website. That has been done, but the result is not official until the board votes to adopt it. Collins emphasized that the board is responsible for the municipal code.

A first reading of the updated code was on the agenda at the Oct. 13 meeting. Trustees Glant Havenar and Karen Stuth said they were unwilling to adopt the revised code until they had time to review the updated code and understand the history of changes made by Municode. They also asked that the residents have a chance to review the updated code. Collins suggested that the board approve the version produced by Municode, which could be amended later by the board. Attorney Matt Krob advised that until a version of the code is adopted, the town would have a shaky foundation on which to adopt new ordinances.

Havenar, Stuth, and residents Brodzik and Nikki McDonald expressed concerns about the absence of the role of commissioners in the updated code. They felt that earlier versions of the code defined a commissioner role that required individual board members to act as liaisons with departments such as the Police and Fire Departments. Other residents mentioned other concerns. Havenar moved to hold a workshop on Monday, Nov. 10 at 4 p.m. to compare the updated code with a redline version documenting changes, and to schedule a public hearing and first reading of the code at the Nov. 10 meeting. The motion passed with Trustees Nicole Currier, Jessica Farr, Havenar, and Stuth voting in favor. Mayor Bill Bass and Trustees Samantha Padgett and Darin Dawson were not pres-

The recodification discussion continued at the Oct. 27 meeting, and occasionally became heated.

Bass said the recodification effort was a work in progress and questioned the need for a workshop.

In regard to concerns about the elimination of the commissioner role, Collins said she believed previous administrations sometimes removed rules from the code when those rules were not being followed. She repeated the need to have one document from which to work.

McDonald, who previously served as mayor, said she believed the commissioner role was removed when John Cressman was mayor because the town staff did not want commissioners. In response to this, Krob said that the board was responsible for the code, the staff took direction from the board, and the staff did not make decisions as McDonald suggested.

Bass suggested that the issue of commissioners be put on the agenda at a future meeting.

Collins expressed her frustration with a lack of direction from the board.

Bass said he did not feel a workshop was feasible. He suggested adopting the code produced by Municode and discussing needed changes at future meetings. Farr and Currier agreed.

The board voted not to hold a workshop and to put a first reading of an ordinance to adopt the update code on the agenda at a meeting in December.

#### Board recognizes police officers, Town Hall team

At the Oct. 13 meeting, Police Chief Jason Vanderpool administered the oath of office to Officers Ramirez, Olson, and Perry. In addition, Lieutenant Adam Lundy presented the Life Saving Award to Officer James Bentley for his courageous actions in dealing with a home invasion and attack in Palmer Lake.

At the Oct. 27 meeting, Bass awarded the HPA Civic Restoration Award for the Town Hall Project to Mark Horton and Ryan Cramer of GMS Consulting Engineers Inc. and Neal Parker of TN Parker.

#### Draft of 2023 budget presented The board received the 2023 draft budget at the Oct. 13 meeting. A workshop was held following the board meeting to present the

draft budget to the public and hear their

comments.

Stambaugh and Fire Chief John Vincent said they had reduced the Fire Department budget by \$232,000. Vincent commented that three-quarters of the ambulance trips



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billed to the town were for patients at Recovery Village, and this was an expense that should be discussed by the board.

#### **Resolutions** passed

The board passed the following eight resolutions:

- Resolution 44-2022, which authorizes a residential well agreement at 822 Meadow Lane.
- Resolution 45-2022, which authorizes road improvements on South Valley Street.
- Resolution 46-2022, which authorizes a memo of understanding with the Little League concerning improvements they will make to the baseball field.
- Resolution 47-2022, which appoints Gene Kaleski to the Planning Commission.
- Resolution 48-2022, which approves a conditional use request for a singlefamily residence in a commercial zone on Vale Street.
- Resolution 49-2022, which authorizes an agreement with GMS Consulting

Engineers Inc. to design the Palmer Lake Elementary School Roadway Project.

- Resolution 50-2022, which extends the land use agreement for 95 and 97 Greeley Blvd.
- Resolution 51-2022, which authorizes the payoff of a vehicle loan.
- Resolution 52-2022, which authorizes a revised Intergovernmental Agreement with the Town of Monument allowing an interconnection of their water system for use in emergencies.

#### **Special event permits**

The board granted four special event permits:

- Yule Log Potluck Dinner on Tuesday, Nov. 29, at 4 p.m. at the Town Hall
- Christmas Tree Lighting on Friday, Dec. 2, at 7 p.m. at the village green by the Town Hall.
- Yule Log Hunt on Sunday, Dec. 11, at 1 p.m. at the Town Hall.
- Second Annual Palmer Lake Out-

Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, Oct. 13

## Board proceeds with long-range plan

By James Howald

At its October meeting, the Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) board heard a final presentation on its long-range plan. It voted on an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) to establish an authority to pursue its water re-use project. A draft of the 2023 budget was delivered to the board and a change of auditors was proposed. The board took a final vote on participation in the Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) program. The board rescheduled its meetings for November and December. Finally, the board heard an update on the status of Woodmoor Lake.

## Long-range plan focuses on ranch water

Richard Hood of JVA Consulting Engineers completed the presentation of the long-range plan his company, working with BBA Water Consultants Inc., has developed for WWSD. The first sections of the plan were presented at the September meeting. *Details about that meeting can be found here:* https://ocn.me/v22n10.htm#wwsd.

At the Oct. 13 meeting, Hood focused on future water supply issues, asset management, and capital improvement projects.

Hood told the board that water from Woodmoor Ranch will play a critical role in the district's future water supply.

He discussed some of the technical issues created by water re-use: Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) increase as water is re-used, and the district's water treatment plants are not prepared to remove them. Reverse osmosis can remove TDS, but will produce brine, which is itself a problem, because disposal requires evaporation ponds or deep well injection. Brine can't be discharged into streams, Hood explained,

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 26th

without a permit that is not likely to be granted. Higher levels of TDS contribute to taste and odor issues.

Hood explained that surface water from Woodmoor Ranch can counteract the issues resulting from water re-use. He suggested a three-phase plan to begin the delivery of water from the ranch to customers in Woodmoor. Water from the ranch would be blended with groundwater from the district's wells before distribution.

The first phase is conveying surface water from the ranch north to Woodmoor, where it would be treated, blended, and delivered. WWSD, along with other water districts, has a project called the Loop that will transport water from Fountain Creek, including water from WWSD's Woodmoor Ranch to customers in northern El Paso County. Both of the district's existing water treatment plants will need to be upgraded to remove trace organics and pharmaceuticals before ranch water can be distributed to customers. Hood said.

The second phase is additional water treatment at the ranch to remove TDS. The brine produced by treatment can more easily be disposed of at the ranch, Hood explained, where there is more space available for evaporation pits. The start date for treatment at the ranch will depend on water quality testing and demand changes, Hood said.

The third phase is to expand the storage capacity of the Callahan Reservoir, which is near the Woodmoor Ranch. Hood estimated that the goal would be adding storage for 1,300 acre-feet of water to the reservoir.

Hood said that once water from the

door Hockey Classic on Jan. 6 and 7 at 6 p.m. at the Palmer Lake Recreation Area.

The next board meeting is scheduled for Nov. 10. See the town's website at www. townofpalmerlake.com to confirm times

and dates of board meetings and work-

shops. Meetings are typically held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month at the Town Hall. Information: 719-481-2953

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



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ranch is fully developed, WWSD will have no need to drill additional wells.

The goal of the asset management plan is to replace and rehabilitate existing infrastructure over a 20-year timeline, Hood said.

Capital improvement planning assumes 2 percent growth in water demand and anticipates the WWSD service area will be completely built out in 2037. Adding an additional storage tank is the first capital improvement project to consider, Hood said.

## IGA for water re-use approved

The board voted to approve an IGA between Cherokee Metropolitan District, Donala Water and Sanitation District, the Town

of Monument, and WWSD that creates a water authority allowing the districts to work together on the Loop Project, which will divert water from Fountain Creek and transport it to customers in northern El Paso County.

The Loop Project, when complete, will provide a way for WWSD to bring water from Woodmoor Ranch to its customers.

The IGA will facilitate the construction of water pipelines and storage facilities and will allow the development and implementation of financing options for those purposes. The IGA is required for the participating districts to be able to accept \$4 million in American Recovery Program Act funding from the county.

The vote to approve was unanimous.

#### 2023 budget delivered

District Manager Jessie Shaffer gave the board copies of a draft budget for 2023. The board scheduled a workshop to discuss it for Oct. 19 at 1 p.m.

New auditor considered Shaffer presented the board a proposal from Prospective Business Solutions LLC to provide audit services to the district. Managing Partner Uli Keeley, who would be handling WWSD's audits, is familiar with the district, Shaffer said, since she has worked for John Cutler and Associates, the district's current auditor. Shaffer asked the board to provide direction on this decision at the next meeting.

**FAMLI opt out complete** Shaffer notified the board that the

necessary steps had been taken to opt the district out of the FAMLI program.

## Two board meetings rescheduled

The board rescheduled its next two meetings. The November meeting will be held on Thursday, Nov. 17 at 1 p.m., and the December meeting will be held on Monday, Dec. 19 at 1 p.m.

## Woodmoor Lake on comeback trail

Operations Superintendent Dan LaFontaine updated the board on the status of Woodmoor Lake. In a typical year, the water level in the lake rises during the months when demand for water is low and declines during the warmer drier months when irrigation uses peak. The construction of the new Lake Pump Station, however, required that Woodmoor Lake be entirely drained. LaFontaine pointed out that the lake is once again refilling, and he estimated it would be refilled before summer 2024.

The next meeting is scheduled for Nov. 17 at 1:00 p.m. Meetings are usually held on the second Monday of each month at 1 p.m. at the district office at 1845 Woodmoor Drive; please see www.woodmoorwater.com or call 719-488-2525 to verify meeting times and locations.

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

Monument Sanitation District, Oct.19

## Sewer overflow contained

By Jackie Burhans and James Howald

At its October meeting, the Monument Sanitation District (MSD) heard from District Manager Mark Parker about a sewer overflow. The board reviewed the MSD budget and heard a report on the Joint Use Committee's (JUC) budget. In his Manager's Report, Parker discussed a lift station failure. The board also voted to opt out of the FAMLI act.

## Sewer overflow kept out of Monument Creek

In his Manager's Report, Parker told the board that a sewer over-flow occurred in the Willow Springs Ranch (WSR) neighbor-hood when the temporary seal between the sewer line serving 20 occupied homes and an unused segment of the sewer lines failed. The developer, who is responsible for maintaining the unused portion of the sewer infrastructure,

responded slowly to the overflow, Parker said, and MSD handled the initial response. The wastewater was dammed, bleached, and vacuumed up by GDM Environmental before it could drain into Monument Creek. Parker said all required reports have been filed and the developer would reimburse MSD for all costs related to the cleanup.

#### Two budgets reviewed

Parker presented a draft of the 2023 budget to the board. He drew the board's attention to the portion detailing the recently received \$684,000 American Recovery Plan Act grant funds that will be used to repair the sewer line between the Synthes Commercial area and the WSR neighborhood.

Parker pointed out the draft budget showed a \$488,375 increase in the district's net position compared with a year ago.

The board scheduled a work-

shop meeting, open to the public, for Wednesday, Oct. 26 at 9 a.m. at the district headquarters at 130 Second St., Monument.

Parker also presented the draft 2023 budget for the JUC, which oversees the Tri-Lakes Waste Water Treatment Facility, which serves the towns of Monument and Palmer Lake as well as the Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District. MSD is a one-third partner in the JUC.

Parker noted that sludge hauling costs doubled in the budget due to the need to empty the sludge pond.

The board voted unanimously to approve the draft JUC budget.

## Problems persist with lift station

Parker said a lift station serving a dozen houses in Wakonda Hills had failed due to its pump being jammed with a knotted shopping bag and a flushable wipe. This lift station has failed in the past, he said, for similar reasons. The pump needed to be replaced in this instance.

Parker said a flier detailing items that should not be flushed had been sent to the homes served by the lift station. He said a future communication to the homeowners would include pictures of what had been cleared from the lift station.

## Board takes final vote on FAMLI

At its September meeting, the board asked its legal firm to draft a resolution opting out of Colorado's Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) program, which provides paid leave for employees that meet the qualifications.

Before taking a vote on that resolution at the October meeting, Parker asked the board to have the district's payroll team handle the reporting required for any employees that make a personal decision to opt into the program.

Board President Dan Hamilton said as the program becomes better defined, the board will be inclined to opt in at a future point.

The board voted unanimously to approve Resolution 10192022-1, which declines participation in the FAMLI program.

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 Nov. 16. See https://colorado.gov/msd. For a district service map, see https://colorado.gov/pacific/msd/district-map-0. Information: 719-481-4886.

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

Donala Water and Sanitation District, Oct. 13

## Draft budget includes increases in charges

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

At the September meeting of the Donala Water and Sanitation District (DWSD), the board discussed a draft of the 2023 budget. The board also considered the Intergovernmental Agree-

ment (IGA) required by the Loop water re-use project. General Manager Jeff Hodge updated the board on his negotiation to send WWSD's wastewater to the Tri-Lakes Waste Water Treatment Facility (TLWWTF) rather than to the Upper Monument Creek

Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility (UMCRWTF) that DWSD is currently using. The board took a final vote on the Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) program. El Paso County Commissioner Holly Williams paid a courtesy visit to the board.

2023 budget considered

The discussion of the proposed 2023 budget included a cost-ofservice analysis by Roger Sams of GMS Inc. Consulting Engineers. Sams reviewed water and sewer costs. He proposed an increase in water service rates for 2023 and presented a new approach to pricing the district's wastewater service that is volume-based rather than the flat-fee approach the district currently uses. His analysis also covered the costs of future capital improvement projects, such as additional pump stations and improved software that controls treatment plants and acquires data from wells and other infrastructure components.

Sams' analysis accounted for inflation by assuming salaries and labor increase by 3%, energy costs by 6%, and insurance costs by 5%.

Sams said DWSD was presently delivering 860 acre-feet of water to customers annually and processing 300 million gallons of wastewater.

To cover the costs of water service, Sams proposed increasing the customer service charge in 2023 by 4.85% per month, raising it from \$29.06 to \$30.37. In addition, the Tier 1 volume charge should increase by 6.10%, raising the cost of 1,000 gallons of water from \$7.54 to \$8, he said.

Sams suggested the board should consider changing its billing for wastewater service from the flat fee of \$39.55 per residence currently in place to a volume-based fee that would increase as wastewater production increases. Sams explained that wastewater production would be calculated by using the metered water delivered to a residence during December, January, and February, months when no outside irrigation is done so all the water



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delivered would be leaving the residence as wastewater and not used to water lawns and gardens. Sams argued volume-based billing would be more equitable because it would be proportional to a household's load on the wastewater system.

Sams said a volume-based charge for wastewater would have two parts: a \$5.85 monthly customer service charge to cover billing and insurance costs, and an \$8.38 charge per 1,000 gallons of metered water delivered in 2023. The charge for metered water would increase to \$8.77 in 2024 and to \$9.16 in 2025.

Board President Wayne Vanderschuere scheduled a workshop for Thursday, Nov. 17 at 9 a.m., the morning of the next scheduled board meeting, to discuss the draft budget in more detail. Vanderschuere said the board was required to approve the budget in December.

### **IGA for Loop project authorized**

WWSD attorney Linda Glesne advised the board on an IGA between Cherokee Metropolitan District, Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD), the Town of Monument, and DWSD that forms a water authority required to receive \$4 million in American Recovery Plan Act funds from El Paso County to proceed with the Loop project. The project will divert water from Fountain Creek and convey it to customers in the participating water districts in northern El Paso County.

Hodge said the funds would be used to refine the design of the project and study the easements required for the necessary

Glesne emphasized the document presented was a draft and changes should be expected. She pointed out DWSD could withdraw from the IGA if the board chooses

Glesne said the IGA forms a new legal entity with a Board of Directors made up of the district managers of the participating water districts. She pointed out that the IGA requires any action of the new water authority be approved by a unanimous vote of the board.

Confidentiality is considered in the IGA, she said, adding that WWSD had proposed including non-disclosure agreements in the IGA that would constrain members from disclosing operational details even if they leave the authority.

Hodge asked the board to authorize him to continue discussing the IGA with the other three districts, and it voted unanimously to do so.

#### Choice of treatment facility undecided

Currently, DWSD sends its wastewater for treatment to the UMCRWTF, which it shares with the Triview Metropolitan district and the Forest Lakes Metropolitan District. Because those two districts have chosen to participate in the North Monument Creek Interceptor project, the future of the UMCRWTF is uncertain. As a result, DWSD has opened negotiations with the Joint Use Committee (JUC), which oversees the TLW-WTF on behalf of its owners, the towns of Palmer Lake and Monument, and WWSD.

Hodge told the board that he had received a letter from the JUC indicating the TLWWTF could process DWSD's wastewater, should the district decide to use the facility. DWSD would be accepted as a customer rather than as a partner, Hodge said.

Triview Metropolitan District, Oct. 20

## Home Rule Charter concerns; **Northern Delivery System** pipeline details laid out

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Triview Metropolitan District (TMD) meeting on Oct. 20, the board heard about the growing concern over the Town of Monument (TOM) Home Rule Charter from two local candidates running for municipal office in the TOM, approved an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) for the Northern Delivery System (NDS) and discussed financing options for the project, and approved a road-widening project and a land sale in Pueblo County.

Director James Otis attended via Zoom and joined in person for the executive ses-

#### **Home Rule Charter concerns**

Monument candidates Jim Romanello and Darcy Schoening expressed concerns about the Home Rule Charter possibly being passed on Nov. 8. For more on this topic, consult OCN's coverage of the Monument Board of Trustees meetings, where the charter was discussed and approved for inclusion as ballot question 2A. A copy of the charter and an explanation about Home Rule Governance can be found at www. townofmonument.org.

#### **Old Denver Road improvements**

District Manager James McGrady said the district had been trying to come up with a way to improve Old Denver Road, and when Conexus had come along the TOM saddled Conexus with the improvements. Triview is not responsible for Old Denver Road, but the road will eventually route into the Conexus development to service multiresidential homes, and by using road and bridge fees the district can help Conexus and serve the constituents, he said.

Mike McDonald, executive operations manager for Kiewit Infrastructure Co., said the impetus to widen Old Denver Road is to keep truck traffic away from residential homes. This partnership takes out the town's responsibility and leaves Conexus to fund the project.

The board unanimously approved the Conexus agreement to fund infrastructure to improve the road.

Note: The Conexus Business Center is a 174-acre industrial, office, and mixed-use development west of I-25 and along the east side of Old Denver Road. The Santa Fe Trail

passes along the west side of the development, through the entire proposed development. The site is home to Woodmen Valley Chapel North.

#### **Northern Delivery System** pipeline project

McGrady relayed the following information to OCN after the meeting:

Triview continues to work with Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) toward a Regional Convey, Treat, and Deliver Water Service contract. CSU has been engaged in reviewing infrastructure design for the improvements needed at the Highway 83 tank site to be able to accommodate a potential Regional Convey, Treat, and Deliver Water

Triview has been acting as project sponsor for this pipeline water delivery project since 2019. As originally conceived, the pipeline would begin at the CSU Highway 83 tank and extend from there to the Triview service area, and from there water would be delivered to the service area of multiple project participants. Initially the project was sized to provide service to the TOM, Donala Water and Sanitation, Woodmoor Water and Sanitation, Triview, and Forest Lakes Metropolitan District (FLMD). The project as originally conceived would have delivered up to 6,500 gallons per minute (9.0 mgd) to participants. As the project progressed, certain originally anticipated participants decided to go in a different direction. As such the project was downsized to 2,778 gallon per minute (4.0 mgd), sufficient for the current project participants, Triview and FLMD.

Triview began conducting a series of public meetings about one year ago and received input from various stakeholders, neighborhood groups, and county officials. After an extensive rework of the proposed route, avoiding Fox Run Regional Park, it was determined that the best route of the downsized 16-inch pipeline was to utilize public roadway rights of way and cross three privately owned properties. The route also takes advantage of the Triview open space already dedicated for utility infrastructure. The pipeline's point of connection will be at the CSU Highway 83 tank site and will include a booster pump station. Triview is

The board authorized Hodge to continue the discussion with the JUC as events

#### **Board opts out of FAMLI**

The board voted unanimously to decline to participate in the FAMLI program. Hodge said a meeting had been held with the district's employees to explain the decision to them and to ensure they know they can choose to participate on their own.

#### **Commissioner visits district**

County Commissioner Holly Williams attended the October board meeting and shared her thoughts on a number of topics,

including outstanding annexation requests and plans for maintaining roads.

The next meeting is scheduled for Nov. 17 at 1:30 p.m. Generally, board meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at 1:30 p.m. and include online access; call (719) 488-3603 or access www.donalawater.org to receive up-to-date meeting information. The district office is located at 15850 Holbein Drive, Colorado Springs.

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





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negotiating a lease or license agreement for the use of CSU's land for the NDS and various appurtenances and has reached agreements with private landowners for all necessary easements and rights of way.

To provide reliable water supplies to Triview, the district obtained a 999 AF Excess Storage Account in Pueblo Reservoir and permission from the federal Bureau of Reclamation for the use of North Outlet Works that allows for the delivery of water to the Southern Delivery System. On Aug. 23, Triview obtained a 1041 Permit from Pueblo County for the operation of Triview's Pueblo Reservoir Account, including the North Outlet Works.

To provide sustainable and reliable water supplies through the Southern Delivery System, Triview purchased 1,057 shares in the Fountain Mutual Irrigation Co. and a 42% share interest in the Excelsior Ditch. along with the acquisition of the Arkansas Valley Irrigating Co. and the Bale Ditch. In total, Triview has purchased about 1,900 average acre-feet of consumptive use water rights that can be used and reused to extinction. These water rights are being decreed for municipal use in Triview's water system and are the subject of an application for appropriative rights of exchange filings. Triview also owns nearly 1,000 acre-feet of storage in Big Johnson Reservoir and 2,000 acre-feet of fully constructed storage in Stonewall Springs South Reservoir.

In summary, Triview has the water rights needed to complete a very robust conjunctive use project that allows renewable water to be delivered to Triview's customers while preserving Triview's nine Denver Basin wells for peaking purposes and drought reserve. Forest Lakes has an exchange contract with CSU that allows for out-of-priority storage in Bristlecone Reservoir (located in FLMD). Wastewater return flows from FLMD's existing Denver Basin wells and reusable return flows stored in Bristlecone Reservoir will provide the source water for Forest Lakes' share of the NDS.

# NDS asphalt milling and overlay McGrady requested the board approve and authorize the board president and treasurer to sign an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between El Paso County and the district for the district to complete milling and overlay improvements to Roller Coaster, Old North Gate, and Baptist Roads. The El

Paso Board of County Commissioners ap-

proved the project.

The board unanimously approved the IGA for the improvements and authorized the designated directors to sign the agreement.

#### Regional partnership approved

McGrady requested the board approve and authorize the district manager to sign the purchase and sale agreement between the Southeastern Colorado Conservancy District by and through the Southeastern Colorado Water Activity Enterprise and the district, for the purchase and/or lease of a 9.64-acre parcel of land in Pueblo County. The land will be used by Southeastern in conjunction with the Arkansas Valley Conduit Project.

McGrady said the project will provide cleaner municipal water for agricultural communities, and the parcel of land will provide storage during the construction of a pipeline 60 years in the making. The acreage will also have a facility to correct a water quality issue from one source treating the water with ammonia and the other using chlorine downstream. The two chemicals cannot be blended, but the facility will remove the ammonia and replace it with chlorine.

Water attorney Chris Cummins of Monson, Cummins, Shohet & Farr LLC said Triview pledged to be a regional partner, and this agreement maintains good neighborly relations. The property will be sold for \$25,000, with a \$5,000 down payment. The project received a lot of federal review, and the district had been in negotiations for a year, but it had not been labor intensive for him. Triview is not a heavy-handed entity and is helping the community, he said.

The board unanimously approved the agreement for the purchase and/or lease, and authorized McGrady to sign the documents.

#### Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) - declined

Attorney Nelson Dunford of the White Bear Ankele Tanaka & Waldron law firm asked the board if any questions remained about the FAMLI program. See www.ocn. me/v22n10.htm#tmd. Dunford said the intent of the state-managed program is to safeguard employees that do not have a comprehensive program, and the district already provides insurance with generous benefits

Public Works and Parks and Open

Space Superintendent Matt Rayno said the district has an existing program that is far more beneficial, with generous sick leave benefits.

Water Superintendent Shawn Sexton agreed with Rayno and said district employees are satisfied with the existing program.

The board unanimously approved Resolution 2022-12, declining district participation in the FAMLI program.

#### **Board code of conduct**

Dunford requested the board adopt Resolution 2022-13, a code of conduct and ethics for the Board of Directors, and said the board is required to maintain comportment at all times, acting on behalf of the district, governing their behavior at public meetings and outside of the district.

The board unanimously adopted the code of conduct.

#### **NDS** funding

McGrady said he had requested a term sheet for a line of credit in the amount of \$5 million for the NDS project from Huntington Public Capital Corp., Ohio, and he introduced Chad Schneider and Abby King to the board.

Schneider said the line of credit was not like some of the long-term debt but similar to a credit card revolving account, with the ability to draw off or pay down. The unused portion would incur a charge fee, and if the district does not use the line of credit, a \$10,000 fee would occur but not interfere with any existing credit.

McGrady said the following:

- It is likely the NDS project will be done before the credit line is fully paid, and the 3.36% variable rate is attractive.
- The estimate from Kiewit Infrastructure Co. is expected to be about \$20 million and by using the 2A (sales tax) money plus the \$5 million line of credit, the district will need another \$1 million.
- The district will need the spare funding for the long lead time on items, and the prices continue to rise.
- A lot can still affect the project, and the district could begin using the line of credit as early as late 2022. He requested the board sign the term sheet and have counsel review the documents.

Sexton said that at some point the principal will need to be paid down and wondered what the rates will be in two years, and he recommended exploring an option for a short-term traditional bank loan, large enough to pay for the cost of the new tank.

President Mark Melville requested the board be provided with a comparison loan for the same amount and said that income was already going toward paying down the 30-year bond, and tap fees are drying up as the district is rapidly built out.

Fiorito said the district cannot use property taxes to pay for the NDS pipeline, because it is an enterprise.

Cummins said the district would need to pay back the loan with rates and fees.

Sexton said the NDS pipeline will be built for future residents, and fees may need to increase in the future.

Jamie Harvey, senior engineer for Kiewit, confirmed that suppliers maintain that the cost of materials is not rising and may be stabilizing, but they cannot predict it will remain that way.

The board tabled the proposal until a traditional loan comparison for the same amount could be provided.

#### Financial report

McGrady said that as of Aug. 31 the district had received \$2 million in sales tax for 2022.

The board unanimously approved the checks over \$5,000 and accepted the August and September 2022 financials as presented.

## Board member updates and comments

Fiorito thanked Rayno and the district staff for cleaning up the Promontory Pointe community mailbox area after it was egged.

#### **Executive session**

The board moved into an executive session at 7:45 p.m., pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes 24-6-402(4) (a), (b), and (e), to receive legal advice on acquisitions and negotiations regarding water litigation matters and property transactions, and to review the construction estimate from Kiewit Infrastructure for the NDS pipeline project.

McGrady confirmed to OCN that after the executive session, the board returned to the regular session and no further action was taken.

Meetings are usually held on the third Thursday of every month at the district office at 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Nov. 17 at 5:30 p.m. For meeting agendas, minutes, and updates, visit https://triview-metro.com.

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

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Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District, Oct. 12

# 2023 budget options presented; commissioner seeks district opinion

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD) meeting on Oct. 12, the board was presented with two options for the proposed 2023 budget, discussed pension matching options, and received details of the treasurer's recent conversation with the El Paso County Commissioner for District 1. The board also approved a pre-order for crew cabs and chassis and heard about an apparatus delay.

Fire Chief PJ Langmaid was absent. *Our Community News* recorded the meeting via Zoom.

#### 2023 budget proposal

Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn said Langmaid had added a column to the 2023 budget showing an option to budget for nine staff per day or eight staff per day. The board needs to decide which of the two proposed budgets to adopt, but the command staff has decided not to hire staff until July 1, 2023, if the board chooses a nine-per-day option. The alternative eight staff per day would mean no other hiring, said Dunn.

Treasurer Jack Hinton said the executive staff preference of eight would allow funds to go elsewhere, but the board and staff all agree that more staffing would be preferable. Until the dual taxation area exclusions end, or the mill levy is increased, the district will struggle for the next few years. As long as the property tax assessments remain the same, and they are not

predicted to go up or down for the next couple of years, and the district adjusts the mill levy to compensate for the two-year temporary RAR reduction, the district will be OK. The adjustment does not allow for extra staff, said Hinton. See www.ocn.me/n22v10.htm#bffrpd.

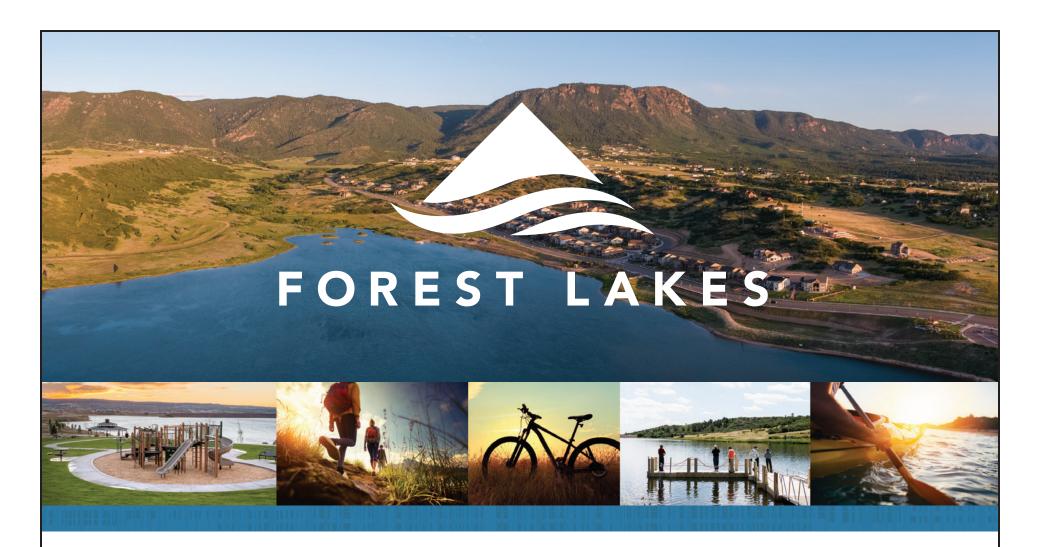
Dunn also said the following:

- A 3% Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) increase for all staff is recommended.
- The total compensation for the Firefighters and Police Pension Association (FFPA) went up to 9.5% in 2022, increasing costs.
- The staff proposes 10% of the expected revenue for the Capital Improvement Fund.

Deputy Chief of Operations Chris Piepenburg said the following:

- The eight-person staffing model is not ideal, and BFFRPD would prefer a 15-a-day staffing model, but it is not a reality with the current revenue.
- The district is looking at alternative staffing models with eight a day to provide a larger training budget instead of having the additional person per shift.
- The exclusion of properties from the dual taxation area had been a big hit to property tax revenue in 2022, with a larger chunk of property exclusion than expected.

BFFRPD (Cont. on 16)



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#### **BFFRPD** (Cont. from 14)

The command staff team is working with Colorado Springs Fire Chief Randv Royal to take smaller chunks, pushing out the exclusion for a little longer. www.ocn.me/v22n2.htm#bffrpd.

Deputy Chief of Planning and Prevention James Rebitski concurred with Piepenburg and said the reduced staffing model will affect manning the ladder truck, but the benefit for 2024 will be a little brighter and if the district has an emergency the budget will allow a cushion for repairs. See www.ocn. me/n22n8.htm#bffrpd.

The board unanimously di-

rected the staff to pursue the eight staff per shift model for the 2023

#### **Matching pension** contributions debated

Hinton said the board needs to discuss reducing FPPA compensation from \$10,000 to \$5,000. It means taking the \$10,000 down to \$5,000 as a \$14,000 loss, because the state will not be matching the maximum amount. District Auditor Dawn Schilling noted the district was over-capitalized in the Volunteer Pension Fund during the audit presentation.

Chairman Nate said the board should ask district counsel for advice on the overcapitalized fund.

Board Secretary Donna Arkowski said when the day comes their spouses are all deceased, then the remainder of the pension fund would be returned to the district. There are 20 people enrolled in the district's volunteer pension plan and most have a surviving spouse, but the chance of almost \$1 million being used up is slim to none, said Arkowski.

district match the full \$10,000 to capture the full state matching contribution.

Hinton said the district is on the full matching contribution.

Director Chad Behnken said, "I am of the camp that the budget is heavy, but how much is \$5,000 in the grand scheme of things."

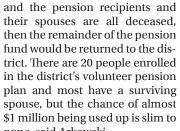
Vice Chairman Jim Abendshan agreed with Behnken and said the maximum contribution is important should things snowball, and I would not want my

Director Kiersten Tarvainen

spending the additional \$5,000, for a full \$10,000 matching contribution, recognizing 2023 will be tight, but the district has emer-

#### Financial report

Hinton said that as of Sept. 30, the district had about \$3.1 million (including the reserve funds and TABOR). Due to the purchase of apparatus, the Capital Improvement Fund is down to about \$200,000. The fund had \$800,000 at the beginning of 2022. See



Dowden recommended the

an extremely tight budget and the district might need the extra \$5,000 to help with the budget, but I have always advocated for

pension reduced in the future.

concurred the full match is important.

Dowden said he supported gency reserve funds.

www.ocn.me/v22n9.htm#bffrpd.

#### Ford F1550 request

Dowden said the board had received a proposal from the command staff to purchase two Ford F1550 crew cabs and chassis for about \$133,000.

Hinton said the district had received \$178,000 in Wildland Deployment income for 2022 and had billed the state for about \$541,600 in additional revenue. Dunn estimates an additional \$132,000 will be submitted in bills for the current teams and apparatus on Wildland Deployments.

Dunn said that in total, the district is estimated to eventually receive about \$749,000 in Wildland Deployment reimbursements for 2022

The district had been given a four-day window to sign up to make the purchase before the window closed.

Hinton said the district should be budgeting for the funds available today, and generally the board will receive the apparatus specifications before approving funds. In this case, it is hard to decide without all the information, he said.

Rebitski said:

- Ford had provided contract pricing of about \$66,647 per chassis, but the exact pricing will be determined Oct.
- Two new Ford plants are opening in January to produce the F550 Super Duty Trucks.
- There is no penalty for canceling the contract later, the trucks will be built regardless and made available for another customer on the waiting list.
- The district would pick up the chassis and the district mechanic will build the trucks at Station 1 to save money.
- The district is waiting on accurate pricing and does not plan to build the trucks immediately, but if the projected Wildland Deployment revenue is not received, the district can cancel the whole project without any liability.

Hinton said there comes a point when the district cannot replace everything and asked are these things actually needed.

Piepenburg said operationally they are needed. The staff struggles and crams into a brush truck, and precious time is lost in the process, he said.

Hinton said he finds it difficult to understand why the district needs to replace everything all at once. The district just purchased a ladder truck and spent \$750,000 on several pieces of apparatus, but it just cannot do that every year. Maybe the money could be used for something else, he said.

Piepenburg said the district will receive the Wildland Deployment reimbursement, the state cannot withhold it, and every state that the staff deployed to will also reimburse the state. It is not fun cramming into one vehicle during deployments, and staff are not comfortable the whole time. They sleep on the floor, next to loud generators. Sometimes they do have nicer accommodations, but more often they are shoved in a crew cab pickup, he said.

Dowden thanked the staff for their diligence and recognized that Ford was pressuring to get names on the waiting list.

Piepenburg said the staff is taking taxpayers into account when proposals are presented to

Rebitski said looking at the long-range plans, if the district does not get on the list for the chassis, the next possible oppor-

tunity will be 2024. The district is making the best of the situation with current resources—the new trucks would benefit the district and the old truck would be used by the administrative office to run errands. There is a "method in the madness" and if we lose the functionality of one truck, it could be a two-year wait, he said.

Dowden said the board still had questions but supports the mission of the department, understanding the order deadline is Nov. 7. The board could authorize the staff to proceed with the order to get the district on the list, and maybe hold a work session before approving about \$250,000 for the trucks to be eventually completed, he said.

The board unanimously approved authorization for the command staff to proceed with the reservation of the crew cabs and chassis.

Dowden said the board will need to decide before the December board meeting, when the 2023 budget will be approved, whether to proceed with the purchase. The deployment revenue is included in the proposed budget, said Dowden.

#### **Commissioner Williams** requests opinions

Hinton said El Paso County Commissioner Holly Williams had telephoned him earlier that evening to request his opinion on the district as a whole but with particular attention to the fire stations and the water supply for the Flying Horse North (FHN) development.

Abendschan said it is one thing to have a designated lot for a new station but another to have the money to build the station, equip it, find funds for additional staff and an ongoing account to pay for that staffing, and provide adequate living facilities. Another huge part for FHN is the half a million gallons of water a day they will be using, and what kind of cistern facility or reservoir will be required for the proposed casitas (guesthouses) and the hotel, he

Hinton said the water resource opinion is not a Fire Department issue.

Abendschan said, "It is a Fire Department issue to have enough water to extinguish a hotel fire."

Hinton insisted the water resource is a public issue and not the Fire Department's problem. He was unsure how water will be delivered to the hotel. Hinton also said Williams suggested:

- It may be possible to deliver water via pipeline to FHN when the Northern Delivery System along Roller Coaster Road is installed, or maybe from Banning-Lewis Ranch, and the district ought to dis cuss matters with the Falcon Area Water Authority.
- BFFRPD could maybe take over the "Shamrock" Station 5 on Highway 83.

Hinton told Williams that taking over another district's station would be a decision entirely up to the command staff.

Note: The "Shamrock" Station 5 on Highway 83 is owned by the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, and the transfer of that property to Monument Fire District is almost complete, as part of the ongoing merger process between those districts. See DW-FPD article on page 17. See MFD article on page 18.

Dowden said the board members cannot comment or make personal opinions on whether they favor FHN or not, but the board can weigh in on National Fire Protection Association standards and response times. The district can inform the devel-





opers of the level of service provided with the current staffing, he said.

Rebitski said:

- The executive staff had been working closely with FHN from nearly the day they broke ground.
- He and Langmaid had met with Classic Homes' executive staff numerous times, and the district had outlined the water requirements to provide fire protection for the plot submittals through the El Paso County Planning and Community Development Department.
- Through those meetings, a Fire Department connection was installed at the FHN Pump House, and a fire hydrant was installed to protect the clubhouse.
- The district defaults to the International Fire Code, and all fire inspections for commercial properties are automatically reviewed by the Colorado Springs Fire Marshal's Office. District staff members attend those
- Commercial development is required to meet the minimum fire codes determined by the fire service, and those codes benefit the Fire Department.

Hinton said the county commissioners need to be notified in writing about the district's capabilities to provide adequate fire protection services, and it should include the plans for building the fire station on the lot designated at FHN off of Black Forest Road before it reaches the county planning commissioners.

Rebitski said Langmaid discussed the potential for a fire station large enough to house a ladder truck close to the hotel at FHN with Doug Stimple, chief executive officer of Classic Homes. The notes will be discussed with the chief, said Rebitski.

Dowden said it is the applicant's duty to provide the necessary documents to the fire district executive staff on how they propose to conform with the applicable requirements. He agreed with Hinton and said it's a "dicey area" if they are not showing final construction plans and only looking for preliminary plat approval. Once they cross that hurdle and it is established that construction is OK, then the county and the district have to figure out how to meet the demands. The district cannot comment if there is an absence of detail sufficient to comment on, if that is the case, said Dowden.

Hinton said someone will have to pay for the new station on the land donated by Classic Homes, and there are only two ways to accomplish that: with a bond or with a station built by the developer to the district's specifications. See www.ocn.me/v22n2.htm#bffrpd.

#### Ladder truck delayed

Rebitski said the 2005 used Pierce aerial mid-mount ladder truck will be delayed until January after leaks were found in the water way (fire hose supply line pipe). It is not a cheap fix, but the installation of an all-new water way will be covered by Pierce Manufacturing.

Note: OCN could not hear Hinton clearly for the first 10 minutes of the meeting during part of the financial report and his comments on the discussion with Williams. The Zoom meeting operator did respond to OCN's request, asking Hinton to "speak up" for the benefit of the Zoom attendees, but only after the 10 minutes had elapsed.

The meeting adjourned at 9:19 p.m.

Meetings are usually held on the third Wednesday of the month at Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. Meetings are open to the public in person or via Zoom. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 16 at 7 p.m. For joining instructions, updates, agendas, minutes, and the chief's and treasurer's reports visit www.bffire.org or contact Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn at admin@ bffire.org or call 719-495-4300.

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## Mill levy adjustment approved, residents voice multiple concerns

Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, Oct. 18

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) meeting on Oct. 18, the board approved a mill levy adjustment for 2023 and addressed multiple concerns raised by the residents from the Sun Hills area of the district.

Fire Chief Andy Kovacs was absent.

#### 2023 mill levy adjustment

Division Chief of Operations Jonathan Bradley requested the board consider approval of the 2023 mill levy adjustment recommendation, allowing the district to capture lost revenue that will occur after the state Legislature passed a temporary Residential Assessment Rate (RAR) reduction to 6.95% for 2023. The reduction will continue for 2024 and the rate is set to return to 7.15% for 2025. See www.ocn.me/ v22n10.htm#dwfpd.

President Mark Gunderman said if he knew for sure that the merger with Monument Fire (MFD) was a done deal, the district would not be asking for the lost revenue. The merger is not signed, sealed, and delivered, even though the district is 80% through the process. Should the merger prove unsuccessful, the \$77,386 annual lost revenue could go toward the salary for a fire chief, said Gunderman.

District attorney Emily Powell of Ireland Stapleton Pryor Pascoe PC law firm said:

- Waiving the right to collect the authorized mill levy adjustment is not recommended, although a nice break for the residents, recapturing the revenue at a later date has never been tested and could prove legally difficult.
- TABOR dictates that a local government cannot certify a mill levy above that in a prior year without an
- If the district waives the right to an authorized mill levy increase and attempts to certify it later, someone could challenge the district for increasing the mill levy without an election.
- The scenario has never been tested in the courts, anart from a similar school district case, but it would not be good for the district and its taxpayers to be the

Gunderman said if the 2023 election is successful, and the merger is completed, the district mill levy will go down about 3 mills and match the MFD mill levy of 18.4 mills.

Vice President Larry Schwarz said he would vote to bypass the opportunity to implement the adjustment. Even though the reduction is a small amount, the residents are suffering from inflation and higher property taxes, and the residents should have the opportunity to enjoy the lower

Powell said residents would see about a \$22 reduction in 2023 on a home valued at \$600,000.

Schwarz said from the public's perspective, the adjustment is an increase. When the district is asking the residents to approve ballot questions in November 2023, this slight mill levy match could be a consideration. With all the increased commercial, residential, and multi-family growth bringing in additional revenue, the \$77,000 will be quickly absorbed, and in MFD the growth is everywhere. The dollars the district is saving by approving the adjustment may not mean a lot, but the perception of the voters may be very important. The board needs to show it is budgeting well during these times, he said.

Gunderman said there is no right or wrong, but the adjustment would provide a safety net if the merger does not go through.

The board approved the administrative staff to implement the RAR stabilization, 4-1.

#### **Public comments—residents voice concerns**

Resident Steve Simpson said allowing public comments at the beginning of the meeting and not a the end may deprive citizens of a chance to give feedback on the board decisions made during the meeting.

Gunderman said the public comment session at the beginning of each meeting is to allow the public to comment on the agenda before board action is taken, and a second public comment session is not usually needed.

Simpson also said:

- Last month, the board discussed the sale of 1500 Sun Hills Drive (formerly DWFPD Station 3) in executive session, and it is not a bad idea to get rid of it since the board has been discussing the sale for seven years.
- The board should defer taking action to engage an agreement with a broker and allow input from the community.
- The public is unaware of the full details, but maybe a letter explaining the facts could be provided to the residents.

Gary Nelson, board president of Emergency Incident Support (EIS) said EIS provides food, hydration, and safe haven to all the El Paso County Fire Departments and other first responder units, to include neighboring counties, and would like to return to using 1500 Sun Hills Drive as its base

Resident Fred Workman said there is concern from the neighbors with regard to the potential for an outside buyer building a residential property on the site, which doesn't meet the minimum lot size in the Sun Hills covenants. He urged the board to revert the property back to the original owner for a fair price and not put it on the open market.

Resident Jerry McLaughlin said the board should not sell, but allow Fleece (the adjacent property owner) to purchase the property or donate the building to EIS, and not allow a greedy realtor to "nounce on it"

#### Sun Hills property sale

Gunderman said the 1500 Sun Hills Drive (formerly Station 3) property appraisal had valued it at \$390,000, and Powell and real estate attorney Kelly Duke of Ireland Stapleton Pryor Pascoe PC law firm had examined the historical data to determine how the property could be sold. The findings determined the property can only be sold to another fire protection district or for private residential use, said Gun-

Duke confirmed the parameters of the property sale and said:

- In 1981 the district purchased .44 acres from MOR-MAC Inc. to construct a fire station.
- The property was located in the A-4 zoning district, now equivalent to RR-5 zoning, requiring a parcel minimum of 5 acres.
- The district requested a variance from the El Paso County Board of Adjustment provided a special use permit was obtained, and the property be platted in accordance with certain sub-division regulations.
- A special use permit and an exemption from subdivision regulations were approved by El Paso County in 1982, and the emergency facility was built in 1984.
- In November 2016 the district reconsidered the use of the station and decided to place the property on the market in January 2017.



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- At the Dec. 6, 2016, board meeting, the Sun Hills HOA or perhaps a group of residents insisted the district delay selling the property due to the covenant restrictions on minimum lot sizing. See www.ocn.me/v17. n1.htm#dwfpd.
- The district sought advice from the county, and it was found that the Board of Adjustment authorized the property for the additional use as a fire station in 1982, but the parcel had always been approved for use as a private residence without the need to seek an additional variance.
- Legally the 1500 Sun Hills Drive property can only be used as a residential property or by a fire protection district under the variance, and the special use permit was granted over 40 years ago.

Powell said the property cannot be sold to a nonprofit agency for any purpose and the zoning is simply not there for any other purpose such as commercial or a public works department. A broker allows for transparency during the sale, and the property will be listed with Multiple Listing Services, and signage will be placed on the property. The board is at liberty to postpone for a month to allow the public time to comment, but nothing will change, and the zoning will be the same in 30 days, said Powell.

Fleece said the district tried to sell the property six years ago, and there was a huge backlash from the residents and the HOA. "I have recused myself from the executive sessions and other discussions regarding the sale of the property, but the board has not reached out to the HOA and the residents." See www.ocn.me/v16.n7.htm#dwfpd. There is a lot of concern the board is making a rash decision, and even though Powell and Duke educated the board, the public ought to be informed about how the property can be sold, said Fleece. See www.ocn.me/v16n11.htm#dwfpd and www.ocn.me/17n2.htm#dwfpd.

Schwarz said the building is a haphazard structure pieced together over time, with safety and code issues. The agenda is what it is, and the process of selling 1500 Sun Hills Drive has inevitably brought the public to the forum. He thanked the five residents in attendance and agreed the board should now do some outreach in the community.

Treasurer Duane Garrett agreed the board should table the decision for a month, but not to extend it out further, and make a timely decision.

Gunderman said the unification path is not a done deal and there is a lot of work to take place, and he said:

- The sale of the station will not have a huge impact on the operational abilities of the Monument Fire Dis-
- The merger could still be derailed, and if Wescott goes back to being Wescott, the financial prospect is grim, and the proceeds from the sale of the property would then have a bigger impact.
- DWFPD would still have two stations requiring major renovation work, with Station 4 (formerly station 1, on Gleneagle Drive) in need of an entire overhaul to bring it up to speed. In the old Wescott budget, there is no money for renovations.
- The can has been kicked down the road for a long time over the sale of 1500 Sun Hills Drive, and the board has to decide for the entire district and that may not please every resident.
- The district will have the expense of two elections in 2023 for the merger and renovation work on the fire stations, that all costs money.
- As far as EIS purchasing the property, it does not qualify as a nonprofit.

Gunderman thanked the residents for their input and said he appreciated the comments. He recommended tabling approval of a broker, to allow further discussion.

Powell said leasing the station to EIS would be a shortterm solution, and it is not recommended with the district undertaking a final merger with MFD in two years. Wescott will not be able to hold the station beyond the next two years unless it is transferred to MFD, and then it would be a question for their legal counsel, said Powell.

Director Mike Forsythe said that he served as a firefighter in the district for 10 years, and he remembers former Chief Bill Sheldon who lived behind the station saying, "the building represented the department and grounds for district training." The facility is no longer a good training facility, and the fire service is a moving progressive operation,

and money is needed to further enhance the department for the good of the district. The board should see the sale through and allow the funds to go toward the greater good, understanding that the residents do not want a strange building in the neighborhood, said Forsythe.

The board unanimously agreed to postpone approval of a broker agreement for at least 30 days.

Bill of sale/quit claim deed approval

Bradley requested the board approve the facilities and vehicle transfer bill of sales and quit claim deeds to Monument Fire District. See www.ocn.me/v22n10.htm#dwfpd.

The board approved and authorized Gunderman and Schwarz to sign the documents facilitating the transfer, 5-0.

#### 2023 budget presentation update

Bradley said the projected revenue for the district in 2023 had not changed from the September meeting, but the legal fees for the 2023 budget had been increased to \$75,000 to handle the inclusion fees, and the 2023 elections needed to complete the merger.

Chief's Report

Bradley highlighted some of the monthly Chief's Report for the board. See MFD article on page 18.

*Note:* Both the DWFPD and MFD boards receive the same monthly Chief's Report. The report can be viewed along with board agendas, minutes, and various information at www.wescottfire.org and www.tlmfire.org. Upcoming board agendas are posted on the district websites no less than 24 hours in advance of board meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

Meetings are usually held on the third Tuesday of the month at MFD Station 1, 18650 Highway 105, at 4 p.m. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Nov. 15 at 4 p.m. Meeting attendance is open to the public in person or via Zoom. For joining instructions, agendas, minutes, and updates, visit www.wescottfire.org or www.tlmfire.org or contact Administrative Assistant Stacey Popovich at 719-484-9011.

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

Monument Fire District, Sept. 28 and Oct. 26

## Mill levy adjustment approved; 2023 proposed budget presented

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Monument Fire District (MFD) meeting on Sept. 28, the board approved a mill levy adjustment and approved the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) bills of sale and quit claim deeds. The board also received a presentation of the proposed 2023 budget, approved a reallocation of funds for a station remodel, witnessed a promotion ceremony, and received multiple updates. On Oct. 26 the board received further updates to the budget, heard about the hiring and recruitment program, and witnessed two recently graduated firefighter/paramedics take the oath

Director Terri Hayes was excused on Sept. 28 and Oct.

#### 26. Secretary Mike Smaldino was excused on Oct. 26. 2023 mill levy adjustment

Fire Chief Andy Kovacs said the district is requesting a mill levy adjustment to offset the anticipated loss of about \$260,000 in property tax revenue in 2023 due to the state Legislature's temporary reduction in the Residential Assessment Rate (RAR) to 6.95%. The district feels it is a significant amount of money coupled with the DWFPD anticipated \$77,000 loss in property tax revenue for 2023. See www.ocn. me/v22n10.htm#dwfpd and www.ocn.me/v22n11.#dwfpd. Note: The district voters passed a ballot question in November 2020 to de-Gallagher. The district is permitted to raise the mill levy to match any lost revenue resulting from a drop in the RAR. The RAR was 7.15% for 2022, and will temporarily drop to 6.95% for 2023 and 2024. See https://leg.colorado. gov/bill.SB22-238 and SB22-293.

President John Hildebrandt said he recommended the board approve the mill levy adjustment of about .5 mills to recoup lost revenue, matching up to the existing 18.4 mills, without any mill levy increase.

Treasurer Tom Kelly said that whatever the mill levy increase is, it should not be above the voter approved amount.

Director of Administration Jennifer Martin said the certification of the mills can happen in December.

The board approved the adjustment to the mill levy 6-0, based on the revenue lost with the temporary RAR reduction for the budget year 2023.

#### **Property transfer**

Kovacs requested the board approve the bills of sale and the guit claim deeds for the transfer of two fire stations, apparatus, and equipment from DWFPD, and then after the DWFPD board signs the documents in October, the bill of sales and quit claim deeds will be signed by the MFD board

The transfer of property completes phase 1 of the merger, then DWFPD will initiate two ballot questions for the November 2023 election in phase 2. The last task for the intergovernmental agreement phase of the merger will be to legally change the district name from Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District to Monument Fire District in 2024.

The board approved the bill of sale and quit claim deed forms as presented on Sept. 28 in a roll call vote, 6-0.

#### Draft 2023 budget

Kovacs said the DWFPD revenue for 2023 is projected to be about \$3.1 million and MFD is projected to be about \$16.5 million, giving the combined district revenue total of about \$19.6 million. The anticipated property tax revenue for MFD is about \$10.9 million, but the district had not received the final estimate from the county assessor, he said.

Kovacs also proposed:

Facilities Capital of about \$2.8 million for a water bore at Station 1, the district training center, build a new Station 3, make renovations to Station 4, a dorm remodel at Station 5, station alerting, and a full re-

## Gail Elizabeth (Hamula) Gross

1955-2022



Gail Elizabeth (Hamula) Gross age 66 of West Bend, Wisconsin went to be with her Lord and Savior on Monday, October 10, 2022. She was surrounded by her loving family at Cedar Community Home Health and Hospice.

Gail was born October 26, 1955 in San Antonio, Texas to Ruth (Schenk) and Dr. Warren

Hamula. She grew up in Fort Wayne, Indiana and Colorado Springs, Colorado. In 1975, she graduated from Chevenne Mountain High School.

Multi-talented in sports, music and academics, at an early age Gail chose to focus on figure skating. When her family moved from Indiana to Colorado, she honed her craft with some of the best coaches and athletes of her sport at the famous Broadmoor World Arena. She enjoyed considerable success including many consecutive National competitions during her teen years. Her greatest achievements came when she entered the ranks of Pairs Skating. In 1977 and 1978, she and her partner Frank Sweiding won the U.S. Pairs Silver Medal and a birth on the World Team. They placed 7th in the World Championships in Tokyo, Japan and went on to win two International Competitions. Then Frank and Gail left the amateur ranks and became professional skaters for a number of years as principle performers in Ice Capades. Gail continued with her love of skating by coaching at several training facilities around Washington, D.C., Denver, Colorado and as director of skating in Zweibrucken, Germany.

On May 31, 1984, Gail was united in marriage to Franklin C. Gross in Castle Rock, Colorado. Their various homes included Kansas, Colorado and several assignments in Germany. Gail and Frank were a true Air Force couple immersing themselves at each of his duty stations. During those years Gail earned her BA from the University of Maryland. She went on to graduate #1 in her class at Wichita State University in Dental Hygiene School. Gail practiced for some 20 years in Colorado and Wisconsin until afflicted with a rare and terminal neurologic disease, Multiple Systems Atrophy (MSA). Her courageous battle in recent years touched the lives of her care givers and new friends in assisted living, full nursing and hospice care.

Gail will best be remembered by many for her petite size and powerful skating as well as her devotion to her husband. However, to those closest to her, Gail's quiet faith was her foundation throughout life.

Gail is survived by her siblings, Dr. Sharon (Mike) Burow of Slinger, Wisconsin and Dr. David (Keri) Hamula of Monument, Colorado; nephews and nieces Matthew (Jodi) Burow of West Bend, Wisconsin, Katherine (Ryan) O'Keefe of Hartford, Wisconsin, Steven Hamula of Monument, Colorado, sister-inlaw Paula (Ron) Duncan of Colorado Springs and stepdaughter Jennifer (Chris) Sokolowski of Denver, Colorado. She is further survived by her great nieces and nephews Madeleine, Taylor, Michael, Andrew, Jacob, Caleb and Molly. Gail was preceded in death by her mother, father and beloved husband of 27 years, Frank.

A Memorial Service honoring Gail's life will be held Saturday, November 5, 2022 at 1:00 p.m. at the Shimon Funeral Home, 824 Union Street Hartford, Wisconsin 53027. Family will greet relatives and friends at the funeral home with visitation that afternoon from 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

A private memorial gathering will be held for immediate family in Colorado on a later date with committal at the Church of Woodmoor Cemetery in Monument, Colorado.

In lieu of flowers her family requests donations on her behalf to be sent to Cedar Community Hospice of West Bend, 5595 County Road Z, West Bend, WI 53095 for their loving and special care they provided to Gail.

MFD (Cont. on 20)

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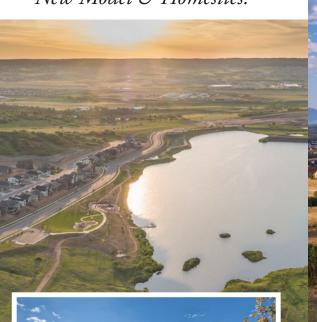
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#### MFD (Cont. from 18)

model at Station 2 on Roller Coaster Road (the staff and PPE equipment are exposed to diesel fumes in its current configuration). Each remodel is anticipated to cost about \$230,000. To include securing land for a potential future fire station 6 at Woodcarver and Baptist Roads. www.ocn.me/v22n9.htm#mfd.

- Capital equipment replacement of about \$215,000 for a power stretcher and loader, a Personal Protective Equipment contaminant extractor for Station 5, a cardiac monitor, bone microphones for Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) masks and a retrofit of one engine for SCBAs.
- Fleet Capital Operations funding of about \$1.766 million to pay off two lease payments, a stock Type 1 engine, a Type 3 Wildland engine, and an ambulance.
- Fleet Capital Administration funding of about \$141,600 to replace the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) battalion chief's vehicle and purchase a light-duty utility vehicle for the proposed fire technician position. Several old vehicles will be sold.
- The Fleet and Facilities Logistics' position will be permanent, and that position will use the Dodge light pickup that is being used by the EMS battalion chief.

Kelly said he hoped that impact fees for all the development would alleviate drawing down the capital funds that will be needed for the Station 3 rebuild, the remodel for Station 2 and renovation projects for Stations 4 and 5, and eventually a sixth station. "I can look anyone in the eye and say, we are a growing district, and we need to reposition," he said.

Kovacs requested the board review the proposed 2023 budget documents and contact the staff with questions. The proposed budget will be made available for public comment and then approved at the November board meeting. For information, visit: www.tlmfire.org.

#### Station 2 remodel

Kovacs proposed the board approve the re-allocation of funds

originally allocated for purchasing new property for Station 2 and use those funds for a full remodel in 2023. The concrete apron for Station 2 had been replaced in lieu of purchasing land. The ambulance moved out of the station, and it is now operated by three firefighters.

Smaldino said he understood that two personnel had left Station 2 and moved to other stations within the district, but he wondered about the eight years of leach field problems that had occurred on the property.

Kovacs said the architects feel they can make improvements, and if the district decided to rebuild elsewhere, no one would buy the property.

Division Chief of Administration/Fire Marshal Jamey Bumgarner said the leach field would need to be removed before it could be sold, and it is functioning the way it should, even with five personnel on shift. The decision to leave at least a three-person engine crew was not an easy decision, but it is right for now, he said.

The board approved the reallocation of funds, 6-0.

#### Firefighter/paramedics take the oath

Kovacs administered the oath of office to recently graduated Firefighter/Paramedics AJ Armstrong and Matt Godson. Kovacs also pinned on the badges and announced that Godson had been awarded class valedictorian, receiving the "Gerald S. Gordan, MD and Gerald J Estep, MD Award for Academic Achievement" at the Paramedic Health School in Den-

#### Fall firefighter recruitment

Division Chief of Operations Jonathan Bradley said the district had interviewed seven final candidates and identified a backup candidate in case one decides on another department. The candidates are also considering three other districts within state. If the district cannot recruit enough candidates to fill the vacant positions, other options will be explored, but the district might have to wait to fill the positions later this year or during winter training next year. Applications this year are down considerably from previous years, and the district is proposing additional funds for 2023 to market the district in the

next recruitment drive.

Kovacs said the district can train firefighters, but it wants candidates with good moral character. The district is planning a summer Empowerment Camp to market fire service careers, reaching out to young adults.

Hildebrandt requested the board approve the proposed hiring of the six firefighters and an additional candidate to fill the vacant position and said nothing in the budget is going to change, and it would be useful for Bradley to know the positions are approved and speed up the hiring process. See www.ocn.me/ v22n10.htm#dwfpd. The board approved extending offers of employment to the candidates, 5-0.

American Medical Response requests

At the September meeting, Smaldino said American Medical Response (AMR) had requested the district respond 18 times into Colorado Springs, and it is an unnecessary strain on the agency.

Kovacs said the district is billing, and it is lucrative. AMR is still low on staffing, and it hopes to have the staffing problem addressed in January 2023. The battalion chiefs on shift still has the discretion to decline requests. Decisions are managed daily on whether to send an ambulance when requested, but if it is the board's desire to reduce the calls, he would discuss the situation at the next Monday morning staff meeting, said Kovacs.

Smaldino noted the district was still responding to a high number of AMR calls into Colorado Springs and said he does not care about the district providing EMS services into Black Forest, that is the whole point of mutual aid, but he objects to providing assistance to a for-profit commercial company when they choose not to staff appropriately. AMR has not assisted the district since February, said Smaldino. See www.ocn. me/v22n3.htm#tlmfd.

DWFPD board Secretary Larry Schwarz concurred with Smaldino and thanked the district and said, "everyone is doing an incredible job."

The Sept. 28 meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

At the October meeting, Bradley said the following:

The district had been requested by AMR 20 times in September, and the district



Above: From left, Division Chief of Administration/Fire Marshal Jamey Bumgarner, Mrs. Golden Rains, Engineer Golden Rains, Fire Chief Andy Kovacs, and Deputy Chief of Operations Jonathan Bradley are pictured at Station 1 on Sept. 28. Rains was promoted from firefighter to engineer in a ceremony at the MFD board meeting. Kovacs administered the oath of office in the swearingin ceremony and presented Rains with his helmet badge. Mrs. Rains pinned on her husband's badge. Photo by Natalie Barszcz.

accepted 14 of those calls.

- The current guidelines provided to the battalion chiefs to manage the requests recommend a general geographic area, taking into account the status of the district ambulances.
- There is leeway to extend beyond the boundaries in an extreme emergency, but the boundary is now reduced from Woodmen Road and Powers Boulevard to not beyond Briargate Parkway and east of Highway 83.
- There will be no response if the district is down to one ambulance.
- If the new parameters had been in place last month, the district would have reduced the calls in September from 14 to 5.

Kovacs said the district will host a meeting on Oct. 31 with the other county transport agencies, Security, Fountain, Falcon, Cimarron, Manitou Fire Departments, to address how the district will be responding to AMR.

Bradley said some of the south county agencies had already informed AMR that they will not respond, and Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District does not receive AMR requests because it doesn't provide advanced life support.

#### Wildland fire responses

Kovacs said the district responded to a brush fire caused by five downed power lines on Oct. 23 in the Red Rocks Ranch area off Highway 105, and a vegetation fire on the east side of Highway 83 that

day. The Highway 83 fire should have moved toward Black Forest due to the wind, but a north wind directed the fire east and burned about three-quarters of an acre. As bad as the winds were that day, it was lucky the fires were extinguished as quickly as they were, he said. The Larkspur Fire Department also responded to the Red Rocks Ranch area fire with a brush

Hildebrandt said, "It was a commendable response."

#### **Candidate mailer** disclaimer

Kovacs said a mailer had been sent to every resident in the district by a Town of Monument candidate for election, depicting himself with trustees and prominently displaying the district name on a fire truck. Kovacs said he reached out to remind the candidate that the district remains apolitical and does not support any particular candidate. Prior permission had not been obtained and it would not have been granted, said Ko-

Oct. 26 meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m. \*\*\*\*\*\*

Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday of the month. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 16 at 6:30 p.m. at MFD Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. For Zoom meeting instruction, agendas, minutes, and updates, visit www. tlmfire.org or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

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

El Paso Board of County Commissioners, Sept. 27, Oct. 4, 11, and 25

## County presents 2023 preliminary balanced budget; renews Black Forest Section 16 lease

By Helen Walklett

During October, the El Paso **Board of County Commissioners** (BOCC) heard proposals for the 2023 county budget. The commissioners also approved the new lease for Black Forest Section 16.

#### **Preliminary** balanced budget

The county Financial Services Department presented the preliminary balanced budget at the Oct. 4 meeting. The approximate \$473 million budget for 2023 includes \$200 million in unrestricted general fund expenditures, \$38 million for the Department of Public Works, and \$84 million for Human Services. It prioritizes investment in roads, public safety, veteran services, park maintenance, improving facilities, and addressing homeless camp cleanups.

An additional \$11.9 million is allocated for road improvements, \$10 million of which is a one-time allocation to address high-priority projects possibly by using some as matching funds to draw federal funding. The remaining \$1.9 million goes to fund gravel road maintenance. The budget also includes a 5% cost of living pay increase for county employees.

Nikki Simmons, chief financial officer, said: "El Paso County is the most populous county in the state, yet the county continues to have the lowest property tax burden and the lowest cost per citizen for delivering high-impact services out of the 10 largest counties in the state. We are committed to investing in high-quality services and infrastructure that will positively impact our community."

As part of the budget-setting process, county departments and offices presented their critical needs to the commissioners at the Oct. 18 and 20 meetings. A further budget hearing is scheduled for Nov. 15 when the BOCC will give final direction on budget allocaparticipate in the budget-setting process. The preliminary balanced budget and all supporting documents can be viewed on the county website at: https://admin. elpasoco.com/financial-services/ budget-finance/county-budget/. Paper copies are available for inspection in the commissioners' office at Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade Ave., Colorado Springs

The final budget vote will be held at the BOCC meeting on Dec.

#### **Black Forest Section 16** lease renewal

At the Sept. 27 BOCC meeting, the commissioners voted unanimously to approve the lease with the State Land Board for Black Forest Section 16. The original 25year lease for the approximate 91 acres off Burgess Road expires this December. The area of open space includes a multi-use perimeter

the well-used Black Forest Slash/ Mulch Program. Todd Marts, director of community services, County Community Services Department, told the commissioners, "This land is not publicly accessible without this lease."

Marts explained that the new lease took over a year to negotiate and is a little different than the old one. It has a 10-year term, and the county will pay 2.5% of fair market value. Describing it as a good deal, he said it was better than the board's standard terms, which require public open spaces to be leased for at least 5% of their fair market value. Under the new lease, the first year's rent is \$21,825. For subsequent years, the rent will be the previous year's rent plus 2.5%. This is a substantial increase in the amount paid under the first lease and is due to the board's fair market value requirement.

Marts said the next step fol-

The public is encouraged to trail system and is the home of lowing the lease's renewal would be for the county to start to look at long-term solutions for the area. This would begin in January with stakeholder meetings and would include Academy School District 20, which also leases land in Section 16 for its School in the Woods.

#### **Fox Run Nature Center**

Progress on the planned Nature Center at Fox Run Regional Park was made at the Sept. 27 BOCC meeting when the commissioners approved the award of a contract and purchase order to TDG Architecture Inc. for design and construction plans for the project at a total cost not to exceed \$469,029.

#### **Winsome Way** and Hodgen Road intersection

At the Sept. 27 meeting, the commissioners approved a settlement agreement between the county and Winsome LLC, the owner of the 767-acre Winsome development at the intersection of Hodgen Road and Meridian Road. The agreement will avoid litigation over the county's Oct. 2021 request that Winsome close the entrance to Winsome Way at the intersection of Hodgen Road with which Winsome complied. The two parties will now work with Winsome's engineering firm, Kimley-Horn, to agree to design changes to the intersection that will bring it into conformity with county standards. Once the changes are made and satisfactorily inspected, the county will reimburse Winsome up to a maximum of \$200,000.

The BOCC approved the final plat for Winsome Way Filing No. 1 in January 2021. It included the

construction of the intersection with Hodgen Road.

## Roller Coaster Road improvements

At the Oct. 4 BOCC meeting, the commissioners approved an intergovernmental agreement between the county and Triview Metropolitan District relating to improvements to Roller Coaster Road. Triview has identified a need to install a new water pipeline within county rights-of-way on Roller Coaster Way, Old North Gate Road, and Baptist Road while the county needs to make certain improvements to these roads. Under the agreement, Triview will complete the roadway improve-

ments when it installs the new pipeline in exchange for a waiver of county permit fees associated with the pipeline work.

#### Other decisions

Sept. 27—the commissioners approved a license agreement between the county,
Forest Lakes LLC, and the
Forest Lakes Metropolitan
District relating to the New
Santa Fe Regional Trail. The
county operates and maintains the trail within county
property between Baptist
Road and the United States
Air Force Academy. The
agreement enables Forest
Lakes to install a public trail
from its Falcon Commerce

Center on Woodcarver Road to the trail. This trail will be maintained by Forest Lakes Metropolitan District.

Sept. 27-approved a contract amendment and change order with Wilson & Co. for civil engineering planning and design services for the drainage system associated with Gleneagle Drive, Struthers Road, and North Gate Boulevard at a cost not to exceed \$455,500. The amendment allows Wilson & Co. to continue its planning and design of the system, which now has additional environmental assessments, multiagency

coordination, and other requirements associated with it.

o Oct. 11—approved a memorandum of agreement and a non-exclusive permanent easement for the Silverton Lane improvement project. The easement concerns property owned by William and Roberta Davis for which county will pay \$4,000.

Oct. 25—approved the reappointment to the Planning Commission of Associate Member Christopher Whitney for one year until Nov. 16, 2023.

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

El Paso County Planning Commission, Oct. 20

# Two special use applications recommended for approval despite neighbors' concerns

By Helen Walklett

At the Oct. 20 El Paso County Planning Commission meeting, the commissioners heard two special use applications arising from code violation notifications. The first was an application by Steve Rael Jr. to legalize the operation of the existing RV and boat storage yard at his Highway 83 property. The second was an application to allow for a minor kennel for eight personal dogs at a Woodmoor property where county rules set a limit of four dogs.

## Highway 83 RV storage special use

Rael's special use application relates to his existing RV storage business at his 40-acre property zoned RR-5 (residential rural) on the west side of Highway 83, one-third of a mile south of its junction with Walker Road.

The business was started in 2006. Rael first received a violation notice in October 2018 and applied to legalize the business in July 2019. To meet the criteria for the special use approval, outside storage activities must be located a minimum of 50 feet from all property boundaries and screened to a minimum of 6 feet in height. Rael did apply to the Board of Adjustment in July 2022 to have the boundary setback reduced to 30 feet to avoid the RVs being parked right on the edge of his driveway, but this request was denied. A site development plan was submitted earlier this year and is being reviewed concurrently.

The storage business currently has 42 storage spots but Rael plans to reduce this to 25, which is the number for which he is seeking approval with this application. He intends to pave the storage

area before moving the vehicles to it. The setback will be the required 50 feet and there will be a 6-foot opaque screen around the area.

Twelve adjoining property owners were notified of the application, with six responding in favor and six in opposition. During the public comment part of the hearing, three neighbors spoke in opposition, stating the business negatively impacts neighboring property values, is not in keeping with the character of the surrounding area, and would set an unwanted precedent. One of the neighbors, Jill Fowler, addressed the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) in June to bring its attention to the long-running code violation. See https:// www.ocn.me/v22n7.htm?zoom\_ highlight=%22jill+fowler%22

One neighbor spoke in support of Rael, stating there were other businesses operating on neighboring properties and asking for the commissioners' mercy particularly in relation to the applicant having lost his wife earlier this year.

Commissioner Jay Carlson said, "I don't think the 6-feet fence really makes any effort at concealing these vehicles. Most of them are 13 feet tall or somewhere thereabouts so my mind would think about a 15-feet fence would cover these up and it's just my opinion that it's just not consistent with the character or in harmony with the surrounding neighborhood." Associate member Bryce Schuettpelz said he was also struggling with it being in harmony with the neighborhood.

Commissioner Thomas Bailey reminded that the commission's job was to apply the criteria for a special use to this specific

application and commented, "It's really unfortunate when we have things like this drive neighbors apart."

Carlson moved for a recommendation to disapprove on the grounds that the use was not consistent in character or harmony with the surrounding neighborhood. Commissioner Tim Trowbridge seconded, but the motion failed 4-5. Bailey made a motion to recommend the application for approval, and this was successful 5-4. The no votes were Trowbridge, Carlson, Schuettpelz, and Commissioner Christopher Whitney.

The application was scheduled to be heard at the BOCC land use meeting at 1 p.m. on Nov. 1 but was continued at that meeting to the Dec 6 BOCC meeting at the applicant's request to allow him more time to prepare.

## Fairplay Drive minor kennel special use

The commissioners heard an application from Mark and Anne Seglem of Fairplay Drive in Woodmoor for approval of a minor kennel as a special use for eight personal dogs, which is four more than is allowed under the zoning. The 1.06-acre property is zoned RS-20000 (residential suburban) and is half a mile northwest of the intersection of West Higby Road and Fairplay Drive.

The Seglems were issued a violation notice on July 20, and they submitted the special use application the following day. A site development plan has been submitted for concurrent review. Kari Parsons, senior planner, Planning and Community Development Department, stressed "This is not a commercial operation."

Applicant Mark Seglem told

the commissioners he and his wife had lived in the house for over 15 years and were not aware of the county limit on dogs when they moved in. He said, "We both realize that ignorance of the law is no excuse, but unfortunately here we are and we've gotten into a situation where we have eight personal dogs. We actually had more than four when we moved into Woodmoor, and neighbors never said anything, and we were surprised to find out that there was in fact a limit." Seglem stressed that five of the dogs are older and said that as they pass, they will not replace them. He also said there is absolutely no intention to operate as a

commercial kennel. The Seglems were part of the Woodmoor Open Space Committee (WOSC LLC) that worked with the developer of part of the former Walters Open Space and were one of the homeowners who purchased land from the original owners and extended their plot to the rear. Seglem said the open space behind the property was donated by WOSC to the Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) and there is a walking trail behind their property where people walk dogs and his dogs bark at them. He said he had asked WOSC at the time they donated the land to move the trail farther away from the back of his property, but this did not happen. He has since asked WIA to move the trail 10 or 20 feet back from his property line and has planted vegetation to screen the boundary but said this will take time to mature.

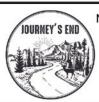
The county sent out 10 notifications to adjoining property owners and received seven letters in objection. No one spoke in favor or against at the hearing.

The commissioners' discussion centered on the fact that the special use, if granted, would run with the land, meaning a future purchaser could decide they wanted to operate a commercial kennel at the property. Lori Seago, senior assistant county attorney, advised a condition could be added to limit the special use so that it expired with the sale of the property. Commissioners Trowbridge and Brian Risley clarified that the applicant's letter of intent stating dogs would not be replaced as they passed would ensure eight dogs were not kept until the property was potentially sold. The applicant stated they would be completely amenable to an additional condition being imposed.

Trowbridge moved for a recommendation of approval with the added condition that the special use would expire with the sale of the property. Carlson seconded and the vote was unanimous.

The application was scheduled to be heard at the BOCC land use meeting at 1 p.m. on Nov. 1. Helen Walklett can be reached at helenwalklett@ocn.me.

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Woodmoor Improvement Association, Sept. 28 and Oct. 26

# Owners raise concerns about excess dogs, new open space

By Jackie Burhans

The Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) board met on Sept. 28, which was too late for the October edition of OCN. At that meeting, the board heard about work being done on roads in Woodmoor. It also met on Oct. 26 to hear owners' concerns about a neighbor with multiple dogs and about plans to improve WIA's newest open space.

#### Update on roadwork

Larry Quirk of Kiewit reported to the board on work being done in Woodmoor starting with Lake Woodmoor and Fairplay Drives. Kiewit was scheduled to do milling, paving, crack repairs, and striping on 18 sites as quickly as possible, Quirk said. Kiewit was not scheduled to work on Furrow Road, as that work was being handled by Martin Marietta. Quirk left the board with a flier showing the sites and proposed schedule but noted it was subject to change. Board President Brian Bush thanked Quirk and said WIA would be sending out information on roads via its eBlast newsletter.

#### Neighbors object to large number of dogs

John Ottino, a resident and former

board member, raised a concern that a neighbor has requested a special use permit for a minor kennel from the county so they can keep eight dogs. Ottino said the neighbor has as many as 11 dogs and that the dogs were a nuisance. WIA's rules and regulations limit the number of pets allowed to four per household. The situation, he said, had been going on for years and a former neighbor had to sell their house and move because they couldn't get the issue resolved. The dog owners had gone to the county who told them to work with the county planner.

However, the county Planning Commission did not mention the 12 letters of opposition. In Ottino's discussion with the county, he was told that the county does not enforce homeowners' association (HOA) regulations and that such disputes were civil issues and he should reach out to the HOA. The hearing on the special use permit is scheduled to go to the county commissioners on Nov. 1, Ottino said, asking that the HOA appear in person to object to this request.

Bush replied that he had signed a letter opposing this minor kennel request and that the board has authorized him to contact County Commissioner Holly Williams to call her attention to the matter. He said that HOA rules are not overridden by the county's decision. The board is aware of the situation and will send a notification to the dog owners reminding them of the rules and regulations to which they must comply, notwithstanding any county decision, he added. Bush added that WIA had pulled up all the records and had not found any complaints that had risen to the level of the board on which they could take action. Now that the board was aware, Bush said, it would act by enforcing the rules and regulations, levying fines, or placing a lien on the property if need be.

**South Woodmoor Preserve improvement**Ottino also asked that the board not install parking at the

new South Woodmoor open space that he, along with 118 others, had preserved by purchasing part of the property and donating the rest to WIA. He wanted WIA to do weed control, maintenance, and mowing but asked that they discourage parking along Caribou and Cloverleaf. Bush replied that WIA made an agreement with WOSC LLC on what they would do with the preserve, which included improving one trail and installing four benches and a pet waste station. WIA has declined WOSC's request that it put up trail markers and name trails but has approved two visual displays with a dedication plaque naming the WOSC members who preserved the open space. Bush said WIA currently has no plans to install any parking at the South Woodmoor Preserve and was looking into placing boulders to discourage vehicle access. He added that the trail would look like every other WIA trail with road base on it that is maintained annually.

**Board highlights** 

- Vice President Peter Bille reported that WIA is taking bids on managed information technology (IT) services and moving forward with its IT systems upgrade project.
- Treasurer Connie Brown said the 2023 WIA budget would be approved at the November meeting and then posted on the website.

- Bush commended Covenants and Forestry Administrator Justin Gates for his fantastic job interacting with WIA members.
- Public Safety Director Brad Gleason noted that winter is around the corner and asked residents to slow down while driving. He also reminded them that the county's Department of Public Services is responsible for plowing the streets in Woodmoor, not WIA. DPS can be reached at 719-520-6460, and more information can be found at https://woodmoor.org/2019/02/snow-and-ice-control-plan/.
- Gleason noted that across the state there has been an increase in auto thefts, but Woodmoor itself had only seen some stolen catalytic converters and bicycles.

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 Nov. 16 due to the Thanksgiving holiday.

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

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

## **October Weather Wrap**

By Bill Kappel

October, like September, was warmer than average with below normal precipitation. There were two periods of active weather during the month, with quiet and mild conditions during the remainder of the month. The generally quiet conditions resulted in a long period of fall colors. This contrasted with the last few years when early freezes or snow ended the fall colors way too quickly.

The beginning of the month was relatively active, with several days of light rainfall and slightly above normal temperatures. The first day of the month saw our last vestige of late summer weather, with a few late afternoon thunderstorms developing as temperatures reached the upper 60s to low 70s. The afternoon and early evening rain showers produced a 10th to a quarter inch of precipitation around the region. High temperatures remained in the 60s from the 1st through the 6th with overnight lows staying above freezing. However, we saw our first frost of the season on the morning of the 6th as lows dipped into the low to mid-30s. Rain showers occurred on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th as well but only produced generally light rainfall, with less than a 10th of an inch each day.

A frontal passage moved through during the early hours of the 7th, bringing low clouds, fog, and drizzle, and cooler temperatures. Highs only reached the upper 40s and low 50s that afternoon. This cooler air mass along with clearing skies the next morning produced our first widespread freezing temperatures of the season. Temperatures just touched freezing in many locations for only a short period, meaning that the growing season wasn't quite over.

Mild and dry conditions then took control for the next couple of weeks, with no precipitation occurring from the 8th through the 22nd. During this period, high temperatures were in the 60s to low 70s most days. However, the dry and mainly clear skies also allowed overnight lows to get chilly. Most nights saw temperatures dip into 20s and low 30s starting on the 12th, effectively ending our growing

A period of active weather began to affect the region on the 21st as a series of low-pressure systems began to move onshore in the Pacific Northwest. The first of these storms moved through from the Northwest, bringing a shot of snow to the mountains and a quick shot of moisture for us. This produced some graupel and sprinkles during the afternoon of the 23rd. Then, as the back portion of the system moved out of the region, a quick shot of upslope weather produced the first accumulating snow of the season for many of us. This produced a dusting of around 2 inches, with the highest amounts around Palmer Lake.

Unsettled conditions behind this first system allowed cooler weather to stick around with a few sprinkles and flurries each day along with partly cloudy to cloudy skies. The strongest of the systems moved through at the end of this period as a compact area of low pressure slid down the west side of the Rockies out of the Pacific Northwest, toward the Four Corners and out across central New Mexico. This powerful and quick-moving storm brought widespread snow to the region starting during the morning hours of the 27th. As the last portion of the storm moved through, areas of convective snow developed during the early afternoon. This produced heavy snowfall for about two hours with mostly sunny skies returning by late that afternoon. This storm put down 2-8 inches of snowfall and a very beneficial half inch of moisture. In addition, the mountains picked up more early season snowfall helping to get us off to a good start in the high country.

Behind this storm, quiet and seasonal conditions returned with temperatures in the 50s for the last few days of the month. Each night was chilly as well, with lows generally in the 20s. However, the sunshine and light winds made for a very pleasant end to the month.

#### A look ahead

November is generally dry and cool around the region. We usually get several light snowfalls interspersed with sunny skies. Gusty winds commonly develop on a couple of days as the jet stream becomes more active and more directly affects Colorado. High temperatures average in the upper 40s early in the month to low 40s by the end with overnight lows often dipping into the teens and single digits.

#### October 2022 Weather Statistics

61.3° (+1.8°) Average High 100-year return frequency value max  $67.7^{\circ}$  min  $50.7^{\circ}$ Average Low **32.4**° (+3.1°) 100-year return frequency value max 36.8° min 26.4° Monthly Precipitation **0.90"** (-0.83") 100-year return frequency value max 4.63"min 0.18" Monthly Snowfall **6.2"** (-4.8") **Highest Temperature** 72° on the 11th, 14th, 20th Lowest Temperature 18° on the 24th, 28h **6.2"** (-5.2") Season to Date Snow (the snow season, Oct 1 to Sept 30) Season to Date Precip. 13.91" (-8.58") (the precipitation season, Jan 1 to Dec 31)

Heating Degree Days 562
Cooling Degree Days 0

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

## **Letters to Our Community**

Guidelines for letters are on page 31.

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

#### It's our future, residents

This month, the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees is asking the residents of Palmer Lake to consider the sale of retail marijuana. On what basis should we, the residents, decide this issue; a prospective increase in town revenue or the negative effects marijuana may bring to the town?

The Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (RMHIDTA) program has published annual reports every year since 2013 tracking the impact of legalizing recreational marijuana in Colorado. The purpose is to provide data and information so that policymakers and citizens can make informed decisions on the issue of marijuana legalization. What they found should scare every resident of Palmer Lake. Here are some of their findings:

- Since recreational marijuana was legalized, traffic deaths in which drivers tested positive for marijuana increased 125 percent while all Colorado traffic deaths increased 24 percent.
- Past month marijuana use for ages 12 and older is 78 percent higher than the national average, currently ranked third in the nation.
- Adult marijuana use is 73 percent higher than the national average, currently ranked third in the nation.

  The yearly number of providence related hespitalizes.
- The yearly number of marijuana-related hospitalizations increased 101 percent after the legalization of recreational marijuana (2013 compared to 2017).
- 67% of local jurisdictions in Colorado have banned medical and recreational marijuana businesses.

Is approving retail marijuana the only solution to Palmer Lake's financial challenges? Or are there other motivations to bring a variety of problems to Palmer Lake? Every voting

citizen of Palmer Lake needs to carefully decide our future. Shall we keep the town we have and face our financial challenges another way? Or should we let Palmer Lake go to pot? *Chris Amenson* 

#### The need is now, the time is now

Twenty-three years—almost a quarter of a century! That is how long it has been since the Lewis-Palmer School District community voted for a mill levy override to support the teachers, staff, and educational programs in this district's schools. In 1999, our community decisively passed an MLO that was not a "slush fund" but a legitimate way to continue the pursuit of excellence for which we are known. Voters now have an opportunity to, once again, pass an MLO to directly support our teachers and non-administrative staff salaries. District 38 teachers and support staff should be treated like the professionals they are. This community can actually control the outcome of this election and its direct impact on the Tri-Lakes area. The need is now, the time is now. Vote yes on 4A. Let us not wait another 23 years to support the professionals who work in our classrooms every day.

**Dwight "Ted" Bauman**Retired Superintendent of Schools,

Lewis-Palmer School District 38

#### D38 MLO

To the anti-tax crowd in School District 38: Enjoying your latest signs. One screams "No more waste." Interesting how those who complain about schools wasting money never seem to be able to provide any concrete evidence of actual waste. First of all, money spent on children is never a waste. It's an investment. Please don't talk to me about "family values" if you aren't going to support the education of young people. Ever since I was in junior high school, which was long ago, I've heard people say, "I don't have kids in school anymore so why should I support the schools?" Well, because, ladies and gentlemen, someone paid for your educa-

tion long ago. That's a gift we should never stop repaying.

As an added insult you have posted your signs near schools so you can show the kids and their teachers just how little you care about them.

One sign carries the words "slush fund." Seriously? Again, sensational, hyperbolic verbiage with no proof to back it up.

The same sign also reads "No one likes sequels." That is true and many of us are tired of listening to well-off, privileged people whining about fulfilling their obligations.

Look folks, if you don't want to support the community you reside in then just move somewhere else.

It's that simple.

Bill Beagle

#### Get the facts straight

Issue 4A supports pay and retention for teachers and support staff at D38 and MA. Reading the county voter pamphlet, errors are quickly identified in the "against" summary. False: D38 has lost 400 students. Fact: This is disinformation. D38 went from 6,895 (2018-19) to 6,637 (2021-22), a loss of 258. Cohort class data shows growth as classes progress through the schools (grades 1-8 from 2017-18 to grades 5-12 in 2021-22). In '19-20, the district had 407 teachers. D38 has 387 teachers now—a loss of 20 positions. Assuming a class of 20, this is a 400 student "loss." D38 actually cut more positions than what corresponded to the student loss of 258. False: "Most" new teachers renewed contracts after 2021-22. Fact: One needs to look at three years to indicate a trend. D38 staff are 10% below market. The statement ignores the decrease of applicants and acceptances due to low salaries. D38 had a 26% turnover rate at the start of this year. Why is it acceptable that this is average? False: A home with an assessed value of \$100K would pay an additional \$745/year. Fact: The author counts on residents not knowing the difference between property assessed value (which doesn't always increase, e.g., 2008-11) and assessed market value. A home with an assessed property value of \$500,000 would pay \$258.89/year or \$21.57/month. Calculating one-fifth of that \$100,000 value would be \$51.78/year or \$4.31/month

D38 residents are smarter than the arguments authored against 4A. We are tired of the harassment and rage that attempt to intimidate our community. Coordinated efforts to deceive us and hurt children have drained themselves of support. Our students deserve the best. Get the facts and join me in voting yes on 4A.

Cynthia Eversole

#### What you need to know about 2D

As a mother of two small children, I'm worried about the future of the town I've chosen to raise my family in.

Palmer Lake's fire and police departments are underfunded, and infrastructure is crumbling. We lack the funds necessary to sustain the town. This is why the trustees decided to put two measures on the ballot this November. 2C calls for a large property tax increase. 2D asks the voters to allow the two existing medical dispensaries to conduct adult-use cannabis sales as well.

A text was sent to Palmer Lake voters urging us to vote no on 2D "to protect our kids, to back 1st responders, and for less crime." I can't imagine a more uninformed and misleading message. There is no link between a town having adult-use cannabis dispensaries and a negative impact on that community's children. Quite the opposite, actually. Towns that have adult-use cannabis dispensaries have access to more funds to create safer, healthier communities by funding their police, firefighters, parks, roads, and the list goes on. Marijuana is already here. It's legal. It's safe. The only question is whether or not we'll benefit from the tax revenue.

I won't let unfounded, outdated fears dictate my vote. Why should we pay higher property taxes to support our town when there is an option that takes the financial burden off of Palmer Lake residents? Vote no on 2C. Vote yes on 2D! Existing dispensaries, existing locations, no burden on Palmer Lake residents.

Jessica Farr

#### Yes to 4A

A key feature of our community is a great school district, and at the heart of our schools are our teachers. I have had children in D38 schools for 12 years and have spent most of those years volunteering-from room mom to PTO to Building Advisory Committee and beyond. I've been able to be in the schools and support my kids. What I have seen are teachers who work long hours and give of their personal lives to make sure that our kids excel. We ask them to educate our children as well as love and care for our children, and yet we feel as though they should do this without a competitive wage and even sometimes at their own expense. Despite our district drawing national media coverage last year, our community has continued to deny ballot measures for education funding. Instead, our district and our teachers have been maligned and left disappointed by a small group of loud community members whose negative rhetoric has dominated our voting. As a result, I've comforted my children over and over when their teachers have left for better opportunities, and I've helped a teenager spend his own money to give his teacher a "little extra" as a thank you for being a great teacher.

Through it all, our teachers have continued to show up. Our community needs to do the same. Colorado education funding is a local issue. We decide the value of our schools and we can choose to fund our district. Our district is falling further behind every year that we continue to undervalue our greatest asset and our children will be the ones to bear the consequences. It's time to make a change. For our community, for our teachers, and for our children, say yes to 4A. *Angela Jones* 

## Thanks to the Kiwanis Monument Foundation

Thank you to the Kiwanis Monument Foundation for granting me the money to purchase individual student graphing whiteboards! I am so grateful to have the Monument Foundation's support to purchase these graphing whiteboards for my students to use in math class. Academic achievement is one of Lewis-Palmer High School's Pillars of Excellence. These individual student whiteboards are great for increasing student participation in a low-stress manner, ultimately increasing student achievement. My students love when we use them in class! Thank you so much for your support!!

Molly Ketchell

Lewis-Palmer High School math teacher

#### Local investment is the only way forward

As a longtime resident of this community, a homeowner, and parent, I believe in doing the research. That's why I've dug into the ask in front of us as taxpayers, and after learning the facts (with none of the fluff), I'm wholeheartedly supportive of 4A.

Our community schools, as well as our charter school, are under a funding crunch, and it's not one of their own creation. They are funded, for the most part, by the State of Colorado, not by local taxpayers. Despite what is printed on your tax bills, the State of Colorado collects, then redistributes those funds across the state to fund education. While we have seen our tax bills increase over time, D38 has not necessarily received those funds in an equitable way.

Any time the state increases funding, it increases funding for all districts. This brings context to what I've heard

from district leadership when they have said funding is 10% lower than surrounding districts. Even though funding has gone up, it goes up for all districts, and I understand they (for the most part) invest those funds in compensation for teachers

Still, our district is down about 10% in compensation for teachers, and this ask under 4A is a direct way for us to invest in teachers and staff who help our children find future success.

Remember, even if state funding goes up after 4A, all districts will use it, and likely on compensation.

Karen Lewandowski

#### Vote yes on MLO

Teachers' work matters. "Getting by" with paying staff low pay versus providing our youngest children with the best professional care all for the sake of lower taxes is not effective and will, in fact, cost all of us more when these students vote, provide your health services, or don't provide to the economy the way the generation before them did.

Staff at D38 can spend more time with our children than their parents do during the week. This time and support should be incentivized to get the best possible applicants every time, for every job, to show our kids their lives matter. There are 50 unfilled positions in our school district right now. Capitalism states that to get people to stay and to have high-quality applicants for openings, you must raise incentives.

Will we find people to replace our knowledgeable and supportive staff when they leave? Since the standards keep lowering for those able to be with our children versus increasing applicants by providing a higher wage, sure, there will be an adult in the classroom (class size to be determined). Will the education a student receives here prepare them for the competitive global market or represent our values of democracy and critical thinking? Will this staff member connect with students to support them and show them they matter? Will they be able to catch problematic behavior for the health and safety of all? Odds are against us if this MLO does not pass since there are fewer education graduates, fewer staying in the field and even fewer who would pick to do the same work here for thousands less than elsewhere

These students deserve every opportunity and ounce of support we can give them in this world. They matter that much

Stephanie Mark D38 mill levy
Teacher and pare

I am not excited
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I am not excited for any reason. I was stung by r sure you all wer sure you all wer crease my incord levy for teacher you have to do is read the Gazette about Dos and other districts struggling to find cortified and classified staff. What teachers make in

to find certified and classified staff. What teachers make in D38 is not equivalent to any close district. A teacher in D38 with 15 years and a master's degree will make \$56,763. The average salary in Cherry Creek is \$88,000. I predicted the teacher shortage years ago, but the "naysayers" either didn't believe me or didn't care. Now, it is simply a case of supply and demand. Simple economics. Read the Gazette about the lack of pay in D38. Where do you think teachers will apply? District 11 is offering \$2,500 bonuses to prospective teachers and is short 100-plus teachers and they pay more. We indeed are impacted by the teacher shortage and other districts that pay more. Someone claimed D38 received an extra \$2 million last year. That sounds like a lot, but divided by 422 teachers, and money for classified staff (838 people—not counting any building or central administrator salaries), that comes to \$99/month for everyone after taxes. Not enough. That money also doesn't address facilities, maintenance, and other issues. The mill levy needs to pass. Terry A. Miller

#### The 4A facts

I would like to share a story: Let's finally work with facts about 4A.

Speaking to an educator who started with D38 23 years ago (why is that important?). That is the last time D38 approved an MLO.

She was hired at \$27,180 as a third-year teacher. She paid \$750 for a two-bedroom one-bath house in downtown Monument. Starting salary for a third-year teacher now in D38 is \$39,360. On Zillow, that same place rents for \$1,525/month. Do the math.

A second teacher, when she left last spring, said, "I am about to finish my master's and I want to move out of mom's basement, I can't afford to work and live in D38." Even with a master's degree, she couldn't afford it.

More facts: Not just signs.

The 400 kids. This is not about 400 students. This MLO is about teachers' salaries. Read the MLO.

Slush fund. There is no slush fund. Facts. This money will be treated exactly like the 1999 MLO (\$4 million). There will be a community-run committee making sure that the money is allocated to the purpose. By law, this money is only for salaries of teachers, bus drivers, and paraprofessionals—not admin. Read the MLO.

Assessed value. The MLO increase is only determined by the assessed value of your home. How much?  $\sim 400/\text{year}$  for the average D38 home.

This MLO is not a sequel. Fact. This is entirely directed to teacher and support staff salary. Read the MLO.

Waste of money? Is paying to retain good teachers, good education, and keeping our housing values the highest in the region a waste of money?

It's time to pay up for D38. It's been too long. Ask yourself. How many districts in the state have gone this long? *Bill Normile* 

#### You get what you pay for

I have been a Monument resident for the past 26 years, and both my kids went through the K-12 D38 school system. During that time, I've witnessed a number of D38 struggles to include failed MLO initiatives, superintendent retention "issues," and capital expenditure fiascos which I suspect is the root cause for most of the negative press surrounding the current MLO initiative. However, the current MLO is specifically written to address the below-average pay of our D38 teachers who, in my opinion, are doing a yeoman's job in trying to educate future generations with insufficient financial support from both the government and residents. There is no dispute from the MLO naysayers that our teachers are, in fact, underpaid—they just don't want to pay more to rectify it. Do we wait until D38 loses their accreditation due to the high turnover rate of experienced teachers before we take action? In other words, would you expect the Broncos to make the playoffs on a regular basis while the rooster is increasingly filled with rookies? I think not. And I trust it's not necessary to discuss another fact that property values are correlated to the quality of the district's education system. These are our kids and future leaders were talking about, and they should be provided the best education we can afford, and teachers are key to achieving that. It would be very unfortunate for all of us if the MLO doesn't pass and we continue to lose experienced teachers to other districts that understand the true value and cost of quality educa-

Tim O'Grady

## 4A is no slush fund—it means a raise for our teachers!

Opponents of 4A call it a "slush fund." The definition of a "slush fund" varies slightly, but it typically refers to "money set aside with no designated purpose." (Investopedia)

Besides knowing that District 38 and Monument Academy need additional funding to stay competitive, I wanted to know if my tax dollars are being designated for a specific purpose. Some who are opposed to 4A claim the money will not be used to increase pay for teachers and staff.

I did some research, and it turns out that salaries in all school districts are paid out of the General Fund. For a mill levy override, like 4A, funds must legally be placed in the General Fund.

This doesn't mean the funding can't be tracked. Districts can show every dollar from a mill levy override, and District 38 promises to do so with 4A. The ballot language states this funding must be used "expressly and solely for" teacher and support staff compensation, excluding administrators. This is binding by law and funds cannot be used for any other purpose.

It is clear the 4A MLO funds will be used to pay teachers and support staff, excluding administration. Furthermore, D38 is prioritizing positions that experience the highest turnover and those with direct, student impact. All our teachers and staff are long overdue for a raise. D38 is doing what they can to provide those funds and now it's up to voters to make it happen.

If you have any doubts about supporting 4A, please do the research. I wanted to share what I learned. It is clear 4A is no slush fund! Please join me and vote yes on 4A. Our teachers and staff deserve it!

Diana O'Toole

## An objective look at the D38 MLO question

With respect for our community, we are co-authoring this letter to clarify the at times confusing topic of local property taxes.

Local measure 4A simply asks: Have Lewis-Palmer School District 38 teachers and non-administrator staff earned a pay increase to a level commensurate with their peers in neighboring districts?

This measure seeks to raise \$5.5 million expressly and solely for teacher/staff pay. No executives nor administrators will be eligible. Approximately \$1 million of these funds will go to Monument Academy as well—based on their share of district enrollment.

To calculate the tax change: 1. On your property tax bill or notice of valuation from the El Paso County Assessor, find the "Actual Value." 2. Multiply that by the assessment rate (6.95% in 2022) to identify your "Assessed Value." 3. Multiply the Assessed Value by the mill rate (7.450) divided by 1,000, for the annual tax amount. Example: \$500,000 x .0695 = \$34,750 x  $(7.45 \div 1,000)$  = \$258.89 per year, or \$21.57 per month.

Property taxes are calculated from the El Paso County Assessor's valuation of each property. This figure is less than current real estate market values. Our analysis determined that the assessor's "Actual Value" is approximately 35% below what Zillow.com estimates.

Both the D38 and Monument Academy School Boards felt this issue worthy of stakeholder attention as it yields a significant impact to the system and, by extension, all students in D38. The data above is accurate, factual, and vetted by local, county, CPA, and legal officials. D38 is committed to providing detailed accounting of the funding from its ori-

gin to distribution, in the spirit of full transparency. Brett Ridgway, Chief Business Officer, D38 Ron Schwarz, Treasurer, D38 Board of Education

Honor and integrity

Having served in the Air Force, I feel I have the ability to speak to service to country and integrity. I want to thank the D38 Board of Education, and our fantastic teachers, staff, and leaders who worked through the hardships of COVID, moving the district forward, all while being paid at least 10% less than their counterparts in surrounding districts.

We have the opportunity to honor their service to our area, and to our students, by voting yes on 4A. Thanks to their efforts, hundreds of students graduate safe and sound every year, extremely well-prepared to become contributing members of our community, whether they go into the workforce, serve in our nation's armed forces, or go on to college or trade school.

Our community has a lot to be proud of, and our educational system is chief among that list. I urge you to vote yes on 4A. I've seen this called a "reasonable ask," and I believe it is. A home that sells at about \$700,000 will be assessed at around \$35,000 by the El Paso County Assessor's Office, and that home would see a tax increase of about \$260 per year. That's just over \$21 per month.

That is more than worth it, and I know our teachers deserve it. After more than a decade of public education being underfunded by the state, our neighboring districts are able to pay their teachers and staff more because their communities have stepped up and passed additional local funding measures. It's time for Monument to show that we value the integrity, service, and performance of our educators and to do the same. Vote yes on 4A!

Amy Shertzer

#### Vote no on District 38 mill levy override

I have been involved in school finance in Colorado for over 40 years and oppose the mill levy override proposed by District 38. This is a 7.450 mill levy increase forever on your property tax with no cap on how much tax can be raised in the future. The \$258 per year on a \$500,000 home is based upon your current valuation. Your valuation will be reassessed in 2023, 2025, and every two years thereafter. Current valuations lag 18 months behind the actual market. Your valuation will increase significantly in 2023 and subsequent years due to the significant increase in home prices. Your valuation goes up, your taxes go up beyond the estimate provided by the district! In addition, salaries in a district reflect the priority placed on salaries compared to other items in the district. Starting pay is a poor indicator of district salaries, as every teacher union wants the majority of salary increases to go to experienced teachers. As this is allowed to happen, beginning salaries suffer. Also, has the district reduced staff if they lost 400 students? Use that salary savings to increase pay for the remaining teachers.

The State of Colorado under Amendment 23 owes districts approximately \$500 million in withheld payments. Before local taxes are raised, the Legislature needs to forget spending millions on programs from wildfires to homelessness until districts are made whole.

Vote no to continually increasing taxes!

Don Smith

Support mechanisms only go so far

I am a big fan of our D38 teachers and staff, and like many others, I support them a lot. I donate my time and hardearned dollars in various ways to help our district. As a community, however, we can only support them so much and then it just isn't enough. We just can't make up for compensation that is so much better in other districts that are competing for our staff.

These past few years it's really become clear to me that despite all we do, whether it's clearing teacher wish lists, donating food for teacher appreciation, volunteering at a school, or waving "We Love Our Teachers!" signs, it can't make up for nor compete with the growing compensation that the surrounding districts offer.

Employees have to make real-life decisions that affect them and their families. Starting teachers in D38 make well under \$40,000 per year. The average D38 teacher can make much better money (in fact, \$5,000 to \$10,000 more every year) by joining Douglas County or D20, and the drive is not that much farther.

It used to be that after a while teachers would be somewhat "stuck" in their district because other districts would only honor up to 10 years of experience if a teacher were to transfer. But now, because of the shortage of teachers across the country, they can pretty easily switch districts and maintain their tenure. The old rule is out the window and D38 is sadly not competing.

We need to invest in our teachers and support staff through 4A to close that gap. 4A will benefit all of the D38 schools in our district, even Monument Academy. For my home, this will cost me \$258 this year. I'm voting yes for the huge benefit this gives us as we compete to remain one of the best districts by retaining our great staff and filling vacancies.

Crystal Starkey

#### District needs more money, not less!

I want to thank Mr. Araje for pointing out (if it's true) that Lewis-Palmer District 38 has lost 400 students and that they are therefore getting less money! That is the very reason that they are asking for more money.

I am not sure which school he is talking about that

would only have 400 students. His solutions of consolidating and reducing staff are utterly ridiculous.

It was good of him to also point out that Lewis-Palmer District 38 has been one of the top-5 school districts in the state for the last 10 years! I am sure that everyone in this area would like to keep it that way. The only way to do that is by hiring top-notch teachers, and that will not happen if you have the lowest salary schedule in the area. Now it is hard to hire the best teachers or even keep them when they can go to a nearby district and make considerably more money. We are getting the first-year or lower-quality teachers that other districts are turning down. Does this tell you

How about the negative signs that are posted around town about the MLO? Slush fund? Waste of money? Sequels? It is very plain to see by reading the information about the MLO to see exactly where the money is going.

Waste? What is more important than the education of our youth?

Sequels and who likes them? I don't know where that is coming from, but I really liked the sequel to Top Gun!

We are the most affluent school district in the state and are paying our teachers the lowest salaries. What is wrong with that scenario?

Let's buck up and put our teachers where they deserve to be paid!

Vote yes on the MLO.

**Richard Stewart** 

#### Yes on 2D for Palmer Lake's future!

The Palmer Lake Board of Trustees is proposing two ballot initiatives. Question 2D involves the sale of recreational marijuana. Medical sales already exist; taxed at a low rate per the Colorado Legislature. Question 2C is a multi-tier mill levy question, which would institute a 30-mill levy if marijuana does not pass, and a 15-mill levy if it does. But MJ funds from the first initiative will come from recreational purchasers, not from your own pockets. If MJ fails and the mill levy does pass, our seniors on a fixed income might not be able to absorb the property tax increase and could lose their homes, as the senior property discount only applies to the first \$200,000 of their home value. MJ is legal for adults to use, possess, and grow everywhere in Colorado. Sales would be in our current medical locations, limited to only two stores. Legal retail sales have proven to hinder illegal sales that often target children. A no vote supports black market activity. Unproven concerns about police safety, or "ruining lives," would have already come to fruition as adult-use cannabis is here to stay. Our police have issued no citations for MJ odor, ever. By state law, you cannot keep MJ out of Palmer Lake. Denying local rec sales only hurts our overall fiscal health. MJ is no longer a moral issue, a source of fear, or a dangerous narcotic. Voting no merely gives our MJ sales tax income to another town. Citizens who don't want the town to have this money don't want better roads, improved drainage, wells, or infrastructure. Are you prepared to shoot yourself in the foot because you need a new pair of shoes? Vote yes on 2C/2D and ensure PL has a future.

Teachers are fighting for survival

It has been said before, and it will be said again: Teachers across this country are fighting for the very survival of their profession. They work long hours, and with take-home pay that does not align with the value our country should place in each of them as contributors to the success of our students across this country.

In our state? Our teachers are fighting even harder. Recent studies showed that Colorado teachers earn 36% less than other college-educated workers. This is the worst gap in the country!

In our district? Our teachers are fighting even harder than those across our state to just survive. Lewis-Palmer School District 38 is underfunded, and as a result it is forced to compensate teachers by an average of 10% less than the surrounding districts. All districts to the north and to the south of D38 pay thousands more for their teachers and support staff.

I have witnessed this firsthand as a community member, as a teacher, and as a parent of students who have gone through our district. I see teachers applying for food stamps, working second jobs, donating plasma as they struggle to make ends meet. We must do better as a district and community to invest in our people, our teachers and support staff, all of whom invest everything they have in our

You can be an integral part in the effort to erase just one of these factors I mentioned, that is the local community factor, by voting yes on 4A, and showing you value our local educational system from the teachers and the support staff all the way to the students, each and every one of them across this district.

**Christine Thomas** 

Approve 4A

No one ever wants to increase taxes, but the issue of our teacher pay disparity between D38 and our neighboring districts has reached a critical juncture. D38 needs to approve 4A on Election Day to keep our education strong as well as our property values high.

My family moved here nine years ago, and we paid more for a home in D38 because of how strong the schools were. If we moved here today, we would now choose D20 or D12 for our place of residence. Our property values will go down as the district continues to become a less desirable place to live for families.

Currently teacher salaries in District 38 are 10% below the average in the Pikes Peak Region, which has led to an annual teacher turnover rate over 26%, according to the Colorado Department of Education. Our teachers can now make close to 10K more a year for driving an additional few miles to a neighboring district. New teachers in D38 are paid just over \$37,000 per year, which is the lowest in the region. D20 starting salaries are between \$45,000 and \$52,000. Why would anyone choose to teach in D38 schools given this pay disparity?

Our high schools have slowly dropped in rankings by the U.S. News & World Report to 70th and 39th in Colorado. Our district, once ranked among the top 10, has dropped to 13th best in the state.

The small tax increase from 4A will provide a salary increase just to get our teachers paid in the middle range. This tax increase will pay for itself whenever you go to sell your home. How can we not support our amazing teachers who have gone years now being so underpaid, and keep our home values strong?

Maria Williams

#### Yes on 4A

I am writing in full support of the district's MLO to increase teacher and support staff pay. While deciding whether or not to go back into the field of education five years ago after staying home with my kids, I researched different districts' pay scales. I was shocked at how little D38 paid their teachers compared to neighboring districts (Douglas County and D20). Since moving to Woodmoor 4.5 years ago, I've been amazed at the quality of our school staff, who continue to keep our district exceptional, even with the lack of professional pay and sometimes, respect, from the community they serve. To give a little perspective, as an eighth-year teacher with a M.Ed. plus 45 additional graduate credits, I would make \$50,869 in D38. Based on the pay scales I was able to access, I would make \$7,000-\$9,000 more in other districts in the Pikes Peak region. If I drove 30 minutes north of Monument, I would make \$25,000 more! This MLO will also increase pay for all support staff, who are often the unsung heroes of our schools. D38 teachers educated our kiddos through the "COVID year" with probably the closest thing to a normal school year that any child in the country received. That feat alone earns my vote to increase salaries. For years our teachers have been doing more with less, and at some point, something has got to give. Several of our favorite teachers left the district over the last few years, and there is no doubt that will continue if salaries remain below average. Our teachers are not average. They are exceptional. The least we can do is get them on par with other nearby districts. It's been 23 years since the last MLO passed. It's

Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

## New fall releases from your favorite authors

By the staff at Covered Treasures

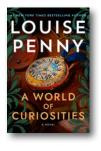
"Chief Inspector Gamache says there are four sentences that lead to wisdom: I don't know. I need help. I'm sorry. I was wrong."—Louise Penny

Settle into fall with a new book from a favorite author:

#### A World of Curiosities (Inspector Gamache #18)

By Louise Penny (Minotaur) \$29.99

A young man and woman have reappeared in Three Pines after many years. But to what end? As Gamache works to uncover answers, a letter written by a long dead stone mason is discovered, describing his terror when bricking up an attic room. When the room is found, a world of curiosities is exposed. In the unsealing, an old enemy is released into their world; into their lives; and into the very heart of the Gamache's home. Release date Nov. 29



#### The Passenger

By Cormac McCarthy (Knopf) \$30

The Pulitzer Prize-winning author returns with the first of two volumes: The Passenger is the story of a salvage diver, haunted by loss, afraid of the watery deep, pursued for a conspiracy beyond his understanding, and longing for a death he cannot reconcile. In 1980, Bobby dives to a sunken jet. Missing from the crash site are the pilot's flight bag, the black box, and the 10th passenger. Look for Stella Maris, the second volume, on sale Dec. 6. The books can each be read as a stand-alone.

#### Lessons

By Ian McEwan (Knopf) \$30

From the Suez Crisis to the Cuban Missile Crisis, the fall of the Berlin Wall to the current pandemic, Roland Baines sometimes rides with the tide of history but more often struggles against it. His journey raises important questions for us all. Can we take full charge of the course of our lives without causing damage to others? How do global events beyond our control shape our lives and our memories? And what can we really learn from the traumas of the past?

#### **Demon Connerhead**

By Barbara Kingsolver (Harper) \$32.50

Charles Dickens wrote David Copperfield from his experience as a survivor of institutional poverty and its damages to children. In transposing a Victorian novel to the contemporary American South, Kingsolver enlists Dickens' anger and compassion, and above all, his faith in the transformative powers of a good story. Demon Copperhead speaks for a new generation of lost boys, and all those born into beautiful, cursed places they can't imagine leaving behind.

#### Desert Star

By Michael Connelly (Little Brown) \$29

Detective Renée Ballard and Harry Bosch team up to hunt the brutal killer who is Bosch's "white whale"—a man responsible for the murder of an entire family. The first priority is to clear the decades-old unsolved rape and murder of a 16-year-old girl, a councilman's sister. When Ballard proves a serial predator has been at work in the city for years, the political pressure has never been higher. This may be Connelly's most gripping book yet.

#### And There Was Light: Abraham Lincoln and the American Struggle

By Jon Meacham (Random House) \$40

Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer Jon Meacham chronicles

the life of Abraham Lincoln, charting how and why he confronted secession, threats to democracy, and the tragedy of slavery to expand the possibilities of America. This book tells of Lincoln's self-education, his loves, his bouts of depression, his political failures, his deepening faith, and his persistent conviction that slavery must end.

#### **Dinosaurs**

By Lydia Millet (W.W. Norton) \$26.95

Named one of the Most Anticipated Books of 2022 by Boston Globe, Literary Hub, and The Millions, this is the story of a man, Gil, who walks from New York to Arizona to recover from a failed love. His life begins to mesh with new neighbors. Millet explores the territory where the self ends and community begins—what one person can do in a world beset by emergencies, and where does hope live?

#### Gilded Mountain

By Kate Manning (Scribner) \$28

Set in early 1900s Colorado, the unforgettable tale of a young woman, Sylvie Pelletier, who bravely faces the consequences of speaking out against injustice. Drawn from true stories of Colorado history, this is a tale of a bygone American West seized by robber barons and settled by immigrants; a story infused with longing for self-expression and equality, freedom, and adventure.

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

#### **November Library Events**

## Schedule changes for November

By Harriet Halbig

Although the weekly math tutoring program has been suspended this semester, the library still maintains a list of local tutors in a variety of subjects for the use of patrons. Please ask for a copy at the information desk.

The Palmer Lake Library will be closed November 7 to 12 for renovations. The book drop will not be monitored during this period and holds will not be delivered. We look forward to welcoming you back to an improved library with additional equipment and new carpeting.

Please note that all Pikes Peak Library facilities will be closed on Thanksgiving, November 24, and will reopen the following day.

Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me

#### Palmer Lake Historical Society, Oct. 20

## The history of the Alexander Film and Aircraft Company

By Natalie Barszcz

The Palmer Lake Historical Society met on Oct. 20 to hear a presentation from Steve Antonuccio, author of No Such Thing as a Typical Librarian, a nonfiction book based on the history of the Alexander Film and Aircraft Company and his experiences working at the Carnegie Library in Old Colorado City, Colorado Springs.

Antonuccio told the story of how two brothers from Keokuk, Iowa, Don Miller Alexander, a bright introvert, and Julian Don Alexander, with great managerial skills and a kind heart, became the largest producers of advertising playlets for movie theaters. The idea began when as boys they discovered a magic lantern projector in their grandfather's attic. The brothers seized the opportunity to launch their first business from their grandfather's hardware store and began charging \$5 per slide for local businesses to advertise products via projection.

After Don graduated with a degree in Electrical Engineering in Spokane, Wash., the brothers established The Alexander Electric Company in 1919 in Spokane, making advertising playlets for the ever-growing number of movie theaters that had edged out opera houses nationwide. Although very successful reaching theater owners with 100 salesmen, there was no overnight package system or longdistance telephones, and distributing the playlets and securing advertisements was cumbersome, so the factory moved centrally to Englewood, Colo.

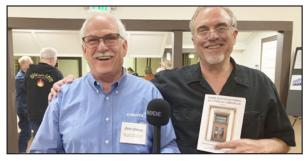
Julian Alexander had become the 91st licensed pilot in the U.S. and decided to teach his salesmen to fly the advertising playlets to the thousands of movie theaters springing up around the nation. Don designed and built the "Eaglerock" bi-plane, and the company manufactured 893 until its ceased production in 1931. It was a "win-win" for the brothers, the advertisers, and theater owners. The concept of advertising in movie theaters began to take off, long before talk radio and television began, and before long the brothers were millionaires.

Tragically, a spark in the paint department of the biplane factory caused an explosion that killed 11 people, when a shop floor door designed to swing inward prevented employees from escaping the fire. The brothers were found guilty of criminal manslaughter and in violation of the Colorado Facilities Act, fined \$1,000 (about \$16,000 today) each, and they received a suspended 90-day probation.

A few days after losing the wrongful death lawsuit in 1927, the brothers moved south in 75 moving trucks to 260 acres of free land on North Nevada Avenue, and The Alexander Film and Aircraft Company was established in Colorado Springs. In 1929, the company also developed the Bullet, a closed cockpit plane capable of speeds up to 130 mph. Although well received with 50 initial orders, the stock market crash and the start of the Great Depression halted production, and only 12 of the advanced aircraft were ever produced.

As the largest producer of commercials in the world in its heyday, the company had 600 employees and 150 field representatives, shipping 150,000 feet of film daily both domestically and internationally. In the 1950s the company created the concept of television commercials using screen actors and establishing a large animation department, with many advertisements and films promoting the beauty of the Pikes Peak region.

Julian Alexander, who died in 1953, thought he had failed by not moving the company into modern aircraft production in support of World War II. The company finally closed its doors in 1974 after being sold numerous times due to financial difficulties. The Carnegie Library in Colorado Springs houses a special collection of the movies shot in the Pikes Peak region. Antonuccio's book is available to purchase at www.amazon.com.



Above: Pictured from left are Peter Blaney and Steve Antonuccio holding a copy of Antonuccio's book No Such Thing as a Typical Librarian at the Palmer Lake Historical Society monthly program on Oct. 20. Photo by Su Osgerby Ketchmark.

The Palmer Lake Historical Society usually meets on the third Thursday of every month. The next event at Palmer Lake Town Hall is scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 17. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for a presentation at 7 p.m. by Jim Sawatzki on Gen. William Palmer. For additional details, visit www. palmerdividehistory.org.

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

Right: Dawn Collins, Palmer Lake town administrator, speaks to guests in the historic Palmer Lake Town Hall before the Palmer Lake Historical Society (PLHS) monthly program on Oct. 20. The Town of Palmer Lake received the Civic Restoration award of excellence from the



Historic Preservation Alliance of Colorado Springs for preserving the historic Town Hall in 2022. PLHS members and the town contributed to and completed some of the restoration, along with TN Parker Construction LLC. Peter Blaney (see photo at the left) of The Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum and PLHS audio visual expert initiated the application for the award. Collins attended the Historic Preservation Alliance Gala and Awards Ceremony held at the Colorado Springs Auditorium on Oct. 12 with PLHS Vice President Doris Baker and Tom Baker (former president of the PLHS). Caption by Natalie Barszcz. Photo by Su Osgersby Ketchmark

High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

## Nature, mood, and electro culture

By Janet Sellers

Digging down to lift your spirits

Can playing in the dirt be a mood booster for kids as well as adults? Actually, soil can make us very happy. Gardening is also called horticultural therapy. The smell of microbacterium vaccae, a microorganism found in soil compost and leaf mold, light up neurotransmitters that release serotonin, a mood-lifting hormone.

Digging deeper, we find that gardening has a plethora of health benefits: health outcomes including reductions in depression, anxiety, and body mass index, as well as increases in life satisfaction, quality of life, and sense of community. The Atlantic magazine has reported, "M. vaccae, a living creature that resides in your backyard compost pile, acts like a mind-altering drug once it enters the human body, functioning like antidepressant pills to boost your

Soil bacteria was found to work similarly to antidepressants, from a study published in the journal Neuroscience. It has been shown to boost the levels of serotonin and norepinephrine circulating in the systems of both humans and mice. Those are scientific studies. But we can do our own research and dig around in the garden soil. The safest is natural, organic compost soil uncontaminated with chemicals or man-made pharma—nature makes her own with the conditions we help create.

Different areas have different soils, of course. Chefs call it "terroir" and it gives our wine, sourdough bread, cheeses, and veggies the local flavors we love. It even affects choco-

Indoor plants have a similar effect on our health and the added benefits of actually absorbing toxins from indoor air. Working with plants-indoors or outdoors-helps lower blood pressure and heart rate simply by playing with the soil and being around them.

**Electro culture: batteries and larger yields** Earth batteries and electro culture sound new, but they actually date back a while. Alexander Bain found this when looking for cheap and available power for telegraph lines. Earth batteries, popular with off-grid public demand, produce a charge of 1-5 volts, and cost \$10 to \$500 depending on materials for how much energy you want to derive from them. A small earth battery can be made from an ice cube tray and a few other materials.

Ancient electro culture used in 1770 France generated larger plants and garden yields via Earth's atmospheric energy, aka Chi, life force, and Aether. As recently as the 1940s, Austrian naturist Victor Schauburger reported copper/brass/bronze tools would not impact of the soil like those made of iron. Iron tools decreased the magnetism of the soil, made the farmers work harder, and caused drought-like conditions, but copper/brass/bronze tools did not alter the magnetism of the soil, leading to high quality soil, and required less work when used.

Janet Sellers is a writer, speaker, artist, and avid lazy gardener, looking to Mother Nature for optimal answers on soil, plants, and health. Contact her: JanetSellers@ocn.me.



Above: Students (from left, Lily Carter, Aalia Renteria, Grace Weitzel, Connick Goodwin, Kaylei Fields, Henry Hedstrand, and Hayden Fields) from Palmer Ridge High School and Lewis-Palmer High School recently helped with Monument Community Garden. Seeing their smiles, all seemed happy with just a few hours of digging around. Photo by Janet Sellers

On the Trail (in memory of Tim Watkins)

## Forest Health Restoration Project update

By Steve Pate

In last month's *On the Trail* column, we mentioned the Forest Health Restoration Project near the Upper Reservoir and Ice Cave Creek west of Palmer Lake. On Oct. 25, I hiked that same loop and did not see any such activity along the Ice Cave Creek trail. However, extensive tree removal has been done west and north of the Upper Reservoir. In a brief discussion with one of the employees of the Miller company, which is doing the logging operation, I learned that the primary focus is on wildfire mitigation,

and it is sponsored by Palmer Lake, not the Pike National Forest or National Forest Service. Palmer Lake Fire Chief John Vincent noted in a phone conversation that the project is mostly complete and that the contractor who did the logging operation was not capable of removing the logs from where they are now stacked. He suggested burning the wood is one option being considered. *Photos by Steve Pate*.

Steve Pate can be contacted at stevepate@ocn.me





**Art Matters** 

## What is the value of art—and who decides?



By Janet Sellers

"Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life."—Pablo Picasso

"That is art!" exclaimed Damien Hirst, who is arguably the UK's richest artist (and entrepreneur and more) and has begun burning thousands of his own paintings. Hirst said recently that burning his art was intended not only to interrogate the value of NFTs (non-fungible tokens) but to explore the idea that market value, like money itself, is underpinned by confidence, an "experiment in belief." "The whole thing is the artwork," he explained at the time. "It's almost like the behavior of the human beings that are all involved in it ... it just will have a life of its own."

Speaking of a life of its own, we have

been creating and sharing art in our area for many decades via artists' events, studio visits, Art Hop, and other special events. Art is important to our lives for many reasons. For some, it is a reflection of society. For others it is a respite from daily life.

Art has a power to influence our lives through imagination, and affects physical, emotional, and mental well-being. It also has the power to affect and possibly influence our local and national culture and politics. And as evidenced by Hirst, art even influences the economy.

As we look at our lives and creativity as a factor of thriving, we see that problemsolving and quality of life go together. Being able to see art for most people who don't make it themselves has been fairly recent

for Europe, the 18th century (British Museum, Louvre, Uffizi), and by the 19th century public access to the formerly private collections was common.

The word "museum" comes from the "nine muses" of classic Greek for the goddesses of inspiration. Where does inspiration come from? The word activates in-spirit-ization of creating. Yet, publicly displayed art sculptures were the earliest on view, the statuary and war booty of ancient Rome displayed on public squares. Medieval church treasuries of sacred objects—in Japan at shrines, sacred "ema" paintings, traditionally of horses, were hung to draw good favor, from a tradition of a gift horse to a temple in hopes of help from the gods.

We have art connections in our area

ranging from public art, artist groups, and galleries to a developing arts district. The Cultural Office of the Pikes Peak Region, COPPeR, is dedicated to promoting the arts for artists, patrons, art lovers in general. It is our nonprofit local arts agency serving the Pikes Peak Region, looking to ensure cultural opportunities reach all people and create a thriving community that is united by creativity.

Janet Sellers is an artist, writer, speaker, and educator for all ages. She exhibits her artworks in cities and museums in Colorado and other places around the world. She can be reached at JanetSellers@ocn.me.

## **Snapshots of Our Community**

## Focusing on the Fight, Sept. 4



**Above:** Lori Brown (second from the left), a Monument resident, a member of the Colorado State Patrol (CSP), and a breast cancer victim advocate, was honored by the CSP Sept. 4. This specially marked cruiser with her name on it salutes those in the fight, the survivors, and those that have gone on before their time. Watch for these special vehicles all around Colorado and find out more about how to reduce the risk of breast cancer. *Photos courtesy of Phil Brown*.

## Chamber at Searle Ranch, Sept. 20



**Above:** Members of the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce, including representatives of Our Community News (OCN), visited the Searle Ranch on Sept. 20 as part of the chamber's Business After Hours program. The event featured a tour of the ranch including close contact with Searle's prize-winning Texas Longhorns. Some chamber members, like Tia M. Mayer of OCN, were brave enough to pet and hand-feed the cattle. *Photo by Michael Weinfeld*.

## NASTaP celebration, Sept. 24



**Above:** The Seven Falls Indian Dancers came to help celebrate Dr. James Jefferson's 89th birthday at the NASTaP (Native American Sacred Trees and Places) annual meeting Sept. 24 at LaForet, Black Forest. Dr. Jefferson (shown at right), president and co-founder of NASTaP, comes from the Four Corners area to help teach local people about CMT's (Culturally Modified Trees) that were modified by Native Americans before settlers came to the Monument and Palmer Lake area. For more information about NASTaP and CMTS, go to nastap.org. *Photo by Marlene Brown*.

## **Monument Warriors, Oct. 1**



**Above:** Nearly 50 people helped the Monument Warriors celebrate their first year as part of Special Olympics Colorado on Oct. 1. Athletes, coaches, volunteers, donors, and grant providers were honored with a breakfast at the Woodmoor Barn. Over 45 athletes took part in four sports. Two dozen of those in the Track and Field program (seen in photo with coaches Sue Walker, Lisa Glen, and David Jones) made it to the regionals on May 14. In the Warriors' second year, over 70 athletes will compete in six sports. A 2022 grant from the Tri-Lakes Women's Club helped pay for uniforms and equipment. *Photo by Grace Glen*.

## **Lantern Festival, Oct. 8**



**Above:** Waiting for the sun to go down was the hardest part of the Lantern Festival on Oct. 8 in Fox Run Park. Put together by El Paso County Community Services Recreation and Cultural Services Program Planner Ryan Dorough and following several successful concerts in the summer, the big finale for the season was the launching of water lanterns. Families purchased over 300 LED lights and eco-friendly lanterns for \$16 as a fundraiser for the park. For more information on other events put together by the county Parks Department, go to https://communityservices.elpasoco.com. *Photo by Marlene Brown.* 

## Monument Candidate Forum, Oct. 13



Above: Eight candidates for Monument Board of Trustees and two for mayor took part in a forum sponsored by the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce on Oct. 13. About 30 people attended in person. Chamber President and CEO Terri Hayes says a handful watched on Facebook Live. The scheduled two-hour forum ran over by about 15 minutes. Trustees Mitch LaKind and Jim Romanello are running for mayor. Redmond Ramos, Darcy Schoening, and Ron Stephens are running for re-election. Jason Gross, Sana Abbott, Marco Fiorito, Ken Kimple, and Steve King are first-time candidates. The panel gave its views on a variety of topics including responsible growth, fiscal responsibility, the area's water supply, home rule, and public safety. A video of the forum can be seen at https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch\_permalink&v=591093166126436. From left are Trustees and mayoral candidates Mitch LaKind and Jim Romanello, Trustees Redmond Ramos and Darcy Schoening, candidate Jason Gross, Trustee Ron Stephens, and candidates Sana Abbott, Marco Fiorito, Ken Kimple, and Steve King. *Photo by Michael Weinfeld*.

## WMMI Pumpkin Patch, Oct. 1



Left: The Western Museum of Mining & Industry (WMMI) hosted its annual Miner's Pumpkin Patch on each of the five Saturdays in October. Each Saturday offered a variety of activities for the price of admission with an added cost for the selected pumpkin of the visitor's choice. A giant slide, a children's straw maze, life-size Jenga and Battleship, hayrides, and gold panning were among the many activities. There was also live music, food trucks, and demonstrations of a vintage apple press. WMMI Executive Director Grant Dewey said the museum "adds a new activity each year to add value for families." He added that "we also operate various museum machines during the event, creating a unique event in combination with the other family-oriented activities." Information on upcoming events at the WMMI is at www.wmmi.org. Pictured: Micah Neal came all the way from Cripple Creek to

the WMMI to find just the right pumpkin for Halloween. Photo by David Futey.

## Creek Week, Oct. 1



**Above:** Friends of Fox Run Park helped with Creek Week by sending a crew of over 20 people to the Santa Fe Trailhead at Baptist Road and Old Denver Highway on Oct. 1. They collected over 20 bags of trash from the trail. Pictured is Julie Haverluk, a board member and active member of Friends of Fox Park. The ninth annual Creek Week was Sept. 24 to Oct. 2. The program benefits the Fountain Creek Watershed Flood Control and Greenway District. Cleanup crews worked countywide. For information, go to www.fountain-crk.org/creek-week. For volunteer opportunities, contact friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com. *Photo by Marlene Brown.* 

## Palmer Lake 0.5K "race", Oct. 9



**Above:** About 850 "runners" turned out on a beautiful sunny day for the eighth annual .5 (Point 5) K "race" Oct. 9 in Palmer Lake. After checking in and receiving their "race" packets on the east side of the lake, participants and other creatures "ran" the first 200 yards and were rewarded with a donut. Then it was onward! Serenaded by a brass quintet from Lewis-Palmer High School, they proceeded across the pedestrian bridge to the finish line. Those who finished were also rewarded with a coupon for a beer or soda at O'Malley's and were treated to another band playing outside. Funds raised by this event will help enhance parks in Palmer Lake. *Photo by Steve Pate*.

## Skate Park Murals, Oct. 15

Right: Monument residents helped artist Lawson Barney (seen in photo) paint two new murals at the Monument skate park on Oct 15. One is a surrealistic scene with an astronaut floating from a campfire, and the other is a memorial to 23-year-old Gage Celano and his 14-year-old cousin Dominic, who were shot to death at Memorial Skate Park in Colorado Springs in 2021. No one has ever been charged in the case. Pikes Peak



Area Crime Stoppers is offering a \$10,000 reward for information leading to an arrest. The project was partly paid for with a \$500 grant from PeakRadar.com. *Photo by Michael Weinfeld.* 

## 100+ Women Who Care, Oct. 19



**Above:** On Oct. 19 at the Woodmoor Barn, Nicholas Thompson shared information about Brad's House in Monument, the October award recipient from the 100+ Women Who Care Tri-Lakes. Brad's House is a safe space where children can begin to address their trauma in a community home-based environment. Cathy Wilcox addressed the members of 100+ Women Who Care Tri-Lakes who each contribute \$100 two times a year to local Tri-Lakes charities to positively impact our communities. For information, contact https://www.100womenwhocaretrilakes.com/join-us/. Caption by Janet Sellers. Photo by Jackie Burhans.

## Front Range Makers Market, Oct. 19



**Above:** Thousands of people spent part of their weekend inside Lewis-Palmer High School in Monument doing some pre-holiday shopping or just bargain hunting at the Front Range Maker's Market Oct. 22 and 23. They scoped out the wares of 135 vendors, who were selling a wide variety of items, including flavored nuts, clothing, jewelry, and assorted crafts. It's the fall market's 26th year in Monument. *Photo by Michael Weinfeld* 

## JCSL Fall Festival, Oct. 27



**Above:** Jackson Creek Senior Living in Monument held its annual Fall Festival on Oct. 27. Residents and guests were treated to individual pumpkin pies, apple fritters, cider, and music by Sandy's Trio of keyboard, percussion, and banjo. Participants could also participate in other activities such as pumpkin painting. Guided tours were also available. Snowy conditions forced this year's festival indoors. *Photo by Steve Pate.* 

## Trunk or Treat, Oct. 28



**Above:** Even with chilly evening temps, kids of all ages got into character and into costumes for local Trunk or Treat events in the parking lots at the YMCA and St. Peter Catholic Church. Families trekked to elaborately decorated trunks for treats and small toys. The welcome wood fire warmed passersby in a corner of church parking lot. *Photo by Janet Sellers*.

## Pumpkin Giveaway, Oct. 22



Above: From left, Trevor Davis, Sparky the Fire Dog, and Vera Davis participate in the Fifth Annual Monument Local 4319 Pumpkin Giveaway on Oct. 22. About 800 free pumpkins were neatly positioned at the Monument Marketplace Clocktower for folks to collect along with some candy. The event also featured a live performance from Manitou Strings, and guests were invited to vote for their favorite carved/decorated pumpkin in the Second Annual Monument Fire District firefighter pumpkin decorating competition. The free event is sponsored by Dianna Goodfellow of Mutual Security Mortgage Ltd. and made possible by Skyline Moving Co., and hundreds of pumpkins were generously donated by Cooksey Farms in Roggen. Goodfellow and a few firefighters and their families travel to the pumpkin farm annually to hand cut and gather the pumpkins. The event also collected 450 pounds in food donations for the Tri-Lakes Cares food pantry. When the votes came in, the "Baby Yoda" pumpkin (see inset) won the decorating competition. *Photo by Natalie Barszcz*.

## Powder Puff Football, Oct. 5



**Above:** On Oct. 5, after a back-and-forth battle between the Lewis-Palmer High School junior and senior girls, the juniors won by one point, breaking the tie score in the closing minute of regulation time. Boy cheerleaders performed along the sidelines. *Photo by Creighton Smith*.

## **TLC Client Appreciation, Oct. 31**



**Above:** On Oct. 31, Tri-Lakes Cares' costumed staff held a client appreciation day complete with mini-horses dressed for the season and the event. Clients enjoyed sweet treats and free pumpkins to decorate and take home. *Photo by Janet Sellers*.

An important message for our readers

## **OCN** 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 affecting 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 postoffice 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 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.

## D38 free and reduced price school meals policy

Applications for free and reduced price school meals, instructions and an information letter to households are available at each school or online at www.lewispalmer.org/nutritional services.

#### **Drop the Distracted Driving**

Colorado has a law that bans texting while driving for drivers of all ages. CDOT found that most people have a "Do Not Disturb While Driving" feature on their phone in a recent survey, but many don't know how to use it. The unexpected can happen in an instant. Be proactive, learn how to enable this feature see DropTheDistraction at distracted.codot.gov.

#### The safety stop is now state law

Bicyclists in Colorado now have safe and legal options for navigating through intersections after governor Jared Polis signed Colorado house bill 22-1028 into law on Wednesday, April 13, 2022. The new law, which allows bicyclists and users of low-speed conveyances to treat stop signs as yield signs and stop lights as stop signs when they already have the right of way, goes into effect immediately statewide. Info: bikecoloradosprings.org.

#### **Neighborhood safety**

What qualifies as suspicious activity? "If you see something, say something." It's vital to report to local law enforcement. Suspicious activity can refer to any incident, event, individual or activity that seems unusual or out of place. Some common examples of suspicious activities include: A stranger loitering in your neighborhood or a vehicle cruising the streets repeatedly. Someone peering into cars or windows. Here's what local authorities and Colorado Department of Public Safety says is needed information: Who did you see; what did you see; when did you see it; where did you see it; why it is suspicious. Call 911 or your local law enforcement agency.

# 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. 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.

#### **DMV** online and kiosks

Clerk & Recorder's Office provides motor vehicle and driver's license services. 30+ services at 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 for more information. See epcdrives.

## 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://cccpi.net/cdot-powers-research.pdf.

#### **MVEA offers rebates**

For information on MVEA's energy efficiency rebates, visit www.mvea.coop/save-energy-money/rebates/, or call 800-388-9881. See ad on page 12.

#### **Emergency Financial First Aid Kit**

If a disaster happened today, could you easily find your crucial household, financial, and medical documents to recover quickly? Use the checklists in the free Emergency Financial First Aid Kit (EFFAK) to ensure nothing is missing. Get the EFFAK at: https://go.usa.gov/xHC2m.

## The Sunflower is for people with non-visible disabilities



Watch for green and yellow sunflower lanyards, bracelets, and ribbons, discreet ways to make the invisible visible. Wearing the Sunflower discreetly indicates to people around the wearer including staff, colleagues and health professionals that they need additional support, help or a little more time. However big or small, your help moves us closer to a society where people recognize that an offer of help, understanding and kindness can make a huge difference to the daily experiences that a Sunflower wearer has.

#### Palmer Lake trailhead parking kiosk

For visitors wanting to park up close to the trailhead, patrons will be required to pay for that parking space. The kiosk was installed in February and staff is testing the hardware. Please note that the kiosk is for debit and credit payments only and the parking payment receipt needs to be displayed on the dash of your vehicle. Take care to confirm that the license plate number printed on the receipt matches your vehicle. The parking fee is \$5 plus processing fee and is subject to change for special events, holidays, etc., as determined by

#### Area code required for local 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.

#### **Tri-Lakes Cares Needs Your Support**

Tri-Lakes Cares is the only food pantry and human services organization located in and serving northern El Paso County through emergency relief and self-sufficiency programs. The community-based, volunteer-supported center is a critical resource for our neighbors in need. The best way to help support Tri-Lakes Cares is to donate. Visit https://tri-lakescares.org/donate to find out how to donate money, medical items, personal supplies, or food. Please check the web for current needs in our food pantry at https://tri-lakescares.org/donate/current-needs. Donation drop-off hours are Monday thru Thursday, 10 am to 4 pm. For more information about Tri-Lakes Cares or how you can help, contact Nicole Pettigrew, director of Volunteers and Community Partnerships, at 719-481-4864 Ext. 111.

#### 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.

#### 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.

#### Senior Beat newsletter—subscribe for free

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

#### Can you volunteer today?

- OCN needs your help. See article on page 28.
- Links to local organizations with an immediate need for volunteers are listed on the county's website, www. elpasocountyhealth.org/volunteering-and-donations, for groups like Care and Share, Crossfire Ministries, blood donations, Early Connections (volunteer from home opportunity), foster an animal, Medical Reserve Corps of El Paso County, Salvation Army, Silver Key, and United Way (ongoing opportunities).
- The Colorado State University Extension office in El Paso County has several opportunities for individuals interested in volunteering. https://elpaso.extension.colostate.edu/volunteer-opportunities/
- Committed to building healthy, caring communities, these El Paso County volunteer-based and nonprofit organizations rely on the hard work of individuals like you. Reach out today and find out how you can play a part by becoming a volunteer in El Paso County. Get involved in El Paso County volunteering non-profits and organizations! https://www.americantowns.com/el-paso-county-co/volunteer-organizations/.
- The El Paso County Sheriff's Office Volunteer Program is composed of a collective citizens group with a true and common desire to partner with the El Paso County Sheriff's Office by volunteering their services while learning more about the internal workings of the law enforcement community. https://www.epcsheriffsoffice.com/volunteer-program-0.
- The El Paso County Volunteer Program is a wonderful opportunity for citizens to learn about the various functions of county government as well as give back to the community. The County's numerous boards and commissions need your experience, talents and time. https://bocc.elpasoco.com/volunteer.
- The El Paso County Fair started as a potato festival in 1905 and has grown into so much more. We will be celebrating our 117th Fair, July 16th -23rd! https://www.elpasocountyfair.com/p/getinvolved/volunteer-opportunities
- The Friends of El Paso County Nature Centers is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit whose mission is to support Bear Creek and Fountain Creek Nature Centers. The organization is comprised of an executive board of elected officers and a general membership governed by official Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation as a 501-c-3 nonprofit organization. https://communityservices.elpasoco.com/nature-centers/nature-center-volunteers/
- 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 or email Christine Jeffson at Christine@childrensliteracycenter.org.

## Lightning & Electric

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Craig Mull (719) 243-2257

Skunks-Coons-Squirrels-Snakes-Woodpeckers



Matt Penfound (OWNER)
Professional Trapper

(303) 660-4816 (719) 570-1757

## **Our Community Calendar**

By Janet Sellers

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

#### **GOVERNMENTAL BODIES**

- Forest Lakes Metropolitan District, Pinon Pines Metropolitan District 1, 2 & 3 board meeting. Typically meets quarterly on the first Mon., 4 pm Meetings are held via teleconference. For virtual joining instructions and updates see www.forestlakesmetrodistrict.
- El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) regular meeting, every Tue., 9 am.. View agendas and meetings at www.agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso. BOCC land use meetings are being held every first and third Tuesday of the month as needed at 1 pm Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade Ave., Suite 150, Colo. Springs. Info: 719-520-6430.
- El Paso County Planning Commission meeting, Thu., Nov. 3, 17, 9 am, Regional Development Center, 2880 International Circle, Colo. Springs. Meetings are livestreamed on the El Paso County News & Information Channel at https://www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel. Normally meets first & third Thu. (as required). Info: 719-520-6300, https://planningdevelopment.elpasoco.com.
- Monument Board of Trustees meeting, Mon., Nov. 7, 14, 6:30 pm, Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Normally meets first and third Mon. Info: 719-884-801, www.townofmonument.org/260/ Board-of-Trustees for remote attendance links.
- Palmer Lake Board of Adjustments, Tue., Nov. 1, 5 pm, Palmer Lake Elementary School Library, 115 Upper Glenway, Palmer Lake. Normally meets first Tues.
- Palmer Lake Board of Trustees meeting, Thu., Nov. 10, 5 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 42 Valley Crescent, Usually meets second and fourth Thu. Info: 719-481-2953. www.townofpalmerlake.com.
- Monument Academy School Board meeting, Thu., Nov. 10, 6 pm at the East Campus in the band room. 4303 Pinehurst Circle. Meets second Thu. Info 719-481-1950, https://www.monumentacademy.net/schoolboard/board-meeting-minutes/.
- Woodmoor Water & Sanitation District board meeting, Mon., Nov. 7, 1 pm, 1845 Woodmoor Dr., Monument. Meets second Mon. Info: 719-488-2525, www. woodmoorwater.com.
- Monument Board of Trustees meeting, Mon., Nov. 7, 21, 6:30 pm, Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Normally meets first and third Mon. Info: 719-884-801, www.townofmonument.org/260/Board-of-Trustees for remote attendance links.
- Tri-Lakes Wastewater Facility Joint Use Committee meeting, Tue., Nov. 8, 10 am 16510 Mitchell Ave. Meets second Tue. Info: Bill Burks, 719-481-4053.
- Palmer Lake Sanitation District board meeting, Wed., Nov. 9, 9 am, call-in only: 650-479-3208, Access Code 76439078, 120 Middle Glenway. Meets second Wed. Info: 719-481-2732. www.plsd.org.
- Monument Planning Commission meeting, Wed., Nov. 9, 6 pm Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Meets second Wed. To see the options for remote public participation in each meeting, visit www.townofmonument.org/263/Planning-Commission-Board-of-Adjustment. Info: 719-884-8028. www. townofmonument.org.
- Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO) meeting, Sat., Nov. 12, 10 am-12 pm., Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. Members of local HOAs welcome. Usually meets bi-monthly second Saturday of the month. www.nepco.org.
- Lewis-Palmer School District 38 board meeting, Mon., Nov. 14, 6-10 pm, Normally meets third Mon. This meeting of the Board of Education will be live-streamed on the district's YouTube channel: www. youtube.com/user/LPSDCommunity, agenda, supporting documents at https://go.boarddocs.com/co/lewispalmer/Board.nsf/vpublic. Info: 719- 488-4700, vwood@lewispalmer.org, www.lewispalmer.org district's YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/LPSDCommunity. Contact Vicki Wood. Phone: 719.481.9546 Email: vwood@lewispalmer.org Website: https://www.lewispalmer.org.
- D38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee, Tue., Nov. 15, 6-8 pm., Monument Academy East Campus, 4303 Pinehurst Circle, Colorado Springs.. Info: tmckee@lewispalmer.org or 719-785-4243
- Donald Wescott Fire Protection District board meeting, in person or via Zoom, Tue., Nov. 15, 4 pm, Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining instructions at www.wescottfire.org or contact Administrative Assistant Stacey Popovich at 719-488-8680. Meetings are usually held on the third Tuesday.
- Monument Sanitation District board meeting, Wed., Nov. 16, 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.
- Palmer Lake Planning Commission, Wed., Nov. 16, usually meets 3rd Wed., Town of Palmer Lake, 42 Valley Crescent

- Academy Water and Sanitation District board meeting, Wed., Nov. 16, 6 pm. Usually meets third Wed. Public can join the Skype meeting: https://join.skype.com/PAcujKTn7Nrh. Check the website for a link: https://academywsd.colorado.gov/notices-and-alerts. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-0711, https://academywsd.colorado.gov.
- Palmer Lake Town Planning Commission meeting, Wed., Nov. 16, 6 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-2953, www. townofpalmerlake.com.
- Woodmoor Improvement Association board meeting, Wed., Nov. 16, 7 pm, Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. Normally meets fourth Wed. Info: 719-488-2693, www.woodmoor.org.
- Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District board meeting, in person or via Zoom, Wed., Nov., 16, 7 pm, Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining instructions at www.bffire.org or contact Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn at 719-495-4300. Meetings are usually held on the third Wednesday.
- Monument Fire District board meeting, in person or via Zoom, Nov 16, 6:30 pm., Station 1, 18650 Highway 105, Monument. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining instructions at www.tlmfire.org or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin, at 719-484-0911. Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday.
- Palmer Lake Historical Society, Thu., Nov. 17. Doors open 6:30, 7:30 meeting. Honoring veterans, Jim Sawatzki presents his film, "The Life and Times of General William Jackson Palmer." Palmer, for whom Palmer Lake was named, was a Civil War hero. Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent St. Meets monthly, third Thursday.
- Donala Water & Sanitation District board meeting, Thu., Nov. 17, 1:30 pm, 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.
- Triview Metropolitan District board meeting, Thu., Nov. 17, 5:30 pm, 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302, Monument. Normally meets third Thu. Info: 719-488-6868, www.triviewmetro.com.

#### WEEKLY & MONTHLY EVENTS

- The Centering Prayer Group at Black Forest Community Church, first Sat., 8:30-10 am The Old Log Church. Centering prayer opens and closes the meetings with discussion and fellowship in between; open to all. Contact Rev. Roger Butts, 719-433-3135, for information
- Half Day Prayer Group at Benet Hill Monastery, first Sat., 9 am-12 pm. All vaccinated guests are welcome. Contact Sister Therese at (719) 355-1638 or (719) 355-1650 or stherese@benethillmonastery.org. See ad on page 3.
- Monument Hill Kiwanis Club meeting, every Sat., 8
   am. www.MHKiwanis.org, MonumentHillKiwanis@
   gmail.com for details, guests are welcome. service
   leadership clubs, Key clubs, Builders Club and K-kids
   at D38 schools. Empty bowls dinner and silent auction Oct. 12. Memberships open to the public. Info: RF
   Smith, 719-210-4987, www.MHKiwanis.org. See ad on
   page 3.
- Neighborhood Net Ham Radio, every Sat., 10 am Amateur ham radio operators practice for emergencies on weekly repeater nets so neighbors can help neighbors. Sign up at www.mereowx.org/neighborhood-net or contactus@mereowx.org.
- The Wine Seller Free Wine Tastings, every Sat., 1-4 pm, 2805 Roberts Dr., Monument. Info: 719-488-3019, 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. 300 Hwy 105, NE corner of I-25 and 105. 9:30 am. Info: 719-460-4179, www.palmerlakeartgroup.com.
- Lions Club Bingo, every Sat. (except the first Sat.), 8:30 am-1 pm and first Mon., 5:30-10 pm Tri-Lakes Lions Club's portion of the proceeds benefit those in need in the Tri-Lakes community. Updated info and location: Jim Naylor, 719-481-8741 or www.trilakeslionsclub. org.
- Tri-Lakes Parkinson's Disease Support Group, third Sat., 10 am-noon, Monument Community Presbyterian Church, 238 Third St., Monument. Info: Syble Krafft, 719-488-2669; Barry (group president), 719-351-9485. If you need any help, please call Syble or Barry.
- **Benet Hill Monastery**, Let us pray with you, walk in the forest, come up and visit prayer sites, every **Sun**. worship is 10:15 a.m., 3190 Benet Lane, 80921. See ad on page 3.
- Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church, every Sun., 8 and 11 am traditional, 9:30 am contemporary. Both inperson (no registration necessary) and live stream at www.tlumc.org/live. Watch live or replay: www.facebook.com/tlumc, www.youtube.com/tlumc.org. Info: 719-488-1365, www.tlumc.org. 20256 Hunting Downs Way, Monument. See ad on page 2.
- Fuel Church Sunday Service, every Sun. Service times, 11:00 am Live service streaming at www.fuelchurch. org at 11:40 am on www.fuelchurch.org. Mountain

- Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Nursery and kids' service. Non-denominational, spirit-filled. Need prayer? Email us info@fuel.org. See ad on page 3.
- **Ridgeview Baptist Church**, every **Sun.**, 10:30 am, temporarily meeting at 9130 Explorer Dr., Colorado Springs, 80920. Info: 719-357-6515 or www.ridgeview-colorado.org. See ad on page 6.
- Women's A.A. Step Study, every Mon., 6:30 pm, meeting remotely, check for details. Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 Baptist Rd. Park in west lot. Info: 866-641-9190.Al-Anon Zoom Meeting, Just for Today Online, every Mon., 9:00 10:00 am Zoom Meeting ID: 889 4142 7446, Password 349309
- Al-Anon Zoom Meeting, Just for Today Online, every Mon., 9-10 am Zoom Meeting ID: 889 4142 7446, Password 349309.
- Monument Life Recovery Group, every Mon., 6:30-7:30 pm, The Ascent Church, 1750 Deer Creek Rd. This faith-based support group is for those seeking freedom from all hurts, habits, and hang-ups. Daycare provided for children under age 11. Info: 303-946-2659, www. liferecoverygroups.com/meetings/life-recoverygroup-3/.
- Amateur ham radio WØTLM (Tri-Lakes Monument ham radio Association), third Mon. All amateur ham radio operators or those interested in becoming one are welcome. Info: www.W0TLM.com
- La Leche League breastfeeding support group Every 2nd Monday night at 7 pm, . Partners and helpers welcome (and babies and kids, too) so we can meet our breastfeeding goals together. Black Forest Community Center 12530 Black Forest Rd, Colorado Springs, CO 80908. For more information, contact RachelKLangley@gmail.com
- Centering Prayer Group at Benet Hill Monastery, every Tue., 10-11 am. All vaccinated guests are welcome. Contact Sister Therese at (719) 355-1638 or (719) 355-1650 or stherese@benethillmonastery.org.
- Essentrics Fitness Program at Senior Center, every Tue., 9 am & Thu., 10 am, Grace Best Education Center, 66 Jefferson St, Monument, CO 80132. Registration & info: Sue Walker, 719-330-0241, www.trilakesseniors. org.
- GriefShare Support Group, last Tue. of the month, 10:30 am-noon. GriefShare Support Group, last Tue. of the month, 10:30 am-noon. NEW LOCATION: Tri-Lakes Senior Center, 66 Jefferson St. in the Grace Best Elementary School building. The Tri-Lakes Silver Alliance has partnered with Colorado Palliative and Hospice Care to host a 13-session grief support group in Monument. RSVP, info: Sue Walker, 719-330-0241.
- Children's Literacy Center, every Mon. & Wed., 5:30-6:30 pm. Provides free one-on-one literacy tutoring to Tri-Lakes children in grades 1-6 who are reading below grade level. Tutoring is at Grace Best Education Center, 66 Jefferson St. Monument. For more information, to become a volunteer tutor, or to enroll your child, visit www.childrensliteracycenter.org or contact Rachel Morin, Tri-Lakes Senior Center Coordinator, CLC 610-246-1047 (cell)
- Senior Citizen Lunches, 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 pm, 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. Free virtual event. Maestro Wilson will conduct monthly hour-long programs. RSVP at www.cspguild.org.
- Gleneagle Sertoma, first and third Wed., 11:45 am to 1 pm at Beasts and Brews, 7 Spectrum Loop, Colorado Springs. The longest continuously serving civic service organization in northern El Paso County features a program speaker addressing local topics of interest. Duane Gritzmaker, dwgritz@gmail.com or 719-649-9220
- **Senior Social**, fourth **Wed.**, 12455 Black Forest Rd. Info: www.aarpchapter1100blackforest.weekly.com.
- Tri-Lakes Church of Christ Wednesday night fellowship classes, every Wed., 6-7:30 pm, 20450 Beacon Lite Road, Monument (corner of Beacon Lite & County Line Roads). Info: 719-488-9613, gregsmith@trilakeschurch.org, www.trilakeschurch.org. Tri-Lakes Cruisers, first Wed., 7 pm. A nonprofit
- **Tri-Lakes Cruisers**, first **Wed.**, 7 pm. A nonprofit car club. Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce community room, with numerous activities and events each month. Club membership applications are now being accepted and are available on the website: https://tl-cruisers.weebly.com.
- AARP Black Forest #1100, second Wed., noon. All ages welcome. In-person, Black Forest Lutheran Church, 12455 Black Forest Rd.
- Senior Bingo, third Wed. Silver Alliance Senior Center, Space is limited to 16 participants. RSVP & info: Sue Walker, 719-464-6873, or email sue@monumentalfitness.
- Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7829, third Wed., 7 pm,

- Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce community room, 166 2nd St., Monument. New members welcome. Info: Post Commander and POC Bruce Beyerly, Bruce.Beyerly@gmail.com.
- VFW Auxiliary to Post 7829, third Wed., 7 pm, The Country Club at Woodmoor, 18945 Pebble Beach Way, Monument. Guests are welcome to join; contact carlsonmkc@aol.com for instructions on how to connect. If you are a relative of a veteran who served on foreign soil during war or other military action, you may be eligible. Info: Kathy Carlson, 719-488-1902, carlsonmkc@aol.com.
- Al-anon Meeting: Monument Serenity AFG, every Thu., 7-8 pm, Ascent Church (formerly the Tri-Lakes Chapel), 1750 Deer Creek Rd., Monument. Info: MonumentSerenity@gmail.com.
- Palmer Divide Quiltmakers, first Thu., 6:30-8:30 pm at Monument Chamber of Commerce building, 166 2nd St, Monument, CO.
- Al-Anon meeting: Letting Go, every Thu., 9-10:15 am at Ascent Church, 1750 Deer Creek Rd., Monument. For additional information go to www.al-anon-co.org.
- Networking breakfast, first and third Thu., Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce in person or via Zoom 166 2nd Street Monument 7:30-9 am free registration at www. TriLakeschamber.com.
- Fuel Church Griefshare, every Thu., 5:30-7:30 pm 643 State Highway 105, Palmer Lake. Email info@fuel.org. 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake.
- **A.A. Big Book Study**, every **Thu.**, 7 pm, Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 W. Baptist Rd. Call 425-436-6200, access code 575176#.
- Friends of Fox Run Park, fourth Thu. Zoom meeting, 7 pm, email friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com, they will email you the link the day of the meeting. Join the growing group to learn about volunteering and supporting the park for forest safety, trails, trees, education, more. Info: friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com.
- Gleneagle Women's Club, membership luncheon, third Fri., Sept-June, various venues, 12 activity groups, i.e., hiking, bridge, etc. Guests welcome. For information contact Amy Miller (310) 941-1590.
- Senior Book Club, second Fri., 11 am-noon, Silver Alliance Senior Center, all are welcome. Coffee & snacks served. RSVP & info: Sue, 719-330-0241.

#### SPECIAL EVENTS

- **VOLUNTEER TODAY! Our Community News mail**ing day, Thu., Dec 1; approx. 9 am-2 pm. We are all volunteers at OCN and need YOUR help, even for an hour two, getting the papers ready to mail. Contact AllenAlchian@ocn.me to sign up and get the address and exact times.
- Food Drive, Nov. 1-15, with Jackson Creek Senior Living, Tri Lakes Cares, non-perishable food items to Jackson Creek Senior Living,16601 Jackson Creek Parkway. Donations daily 8 a.m. -7 p.m., front lobby, main entrance. Currently needed items: https://trilakescares.org/donate/current-needs/.
- Black Forest Arts and Crafts Guild 58th annual Fall arts and crafts show, Wed.-Sun., Nov. 2-6, Free. Black Forest Community Center, 12530 Black Forest Rd., Black Forest.
- Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts, oil painting class, all levels, Thursdays, (Reserve for Nov.), 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Instructor John DeFrancesco. Reg.\$50: https:// trilakesarts.org/event/oil-painting-made-easy/
- Forest Mindful Walk, Sat., Nov. 5, 10 am, enjoy the forest, local Native American culturally modified trees (CMT)with Friends of Fox Run Park, Rollercoaster Trailhead, (just south of Baptist Rd).
- Voter service and polling center collection services in your neighborhood, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Nov. 4,5; 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Nov. 7, 8, the Barn, Woodmoor community center; dropbox 24/7 monument park and ride. see ad on page 11,
- Pikes Peak brewing company beer release Wed., Nov. 9, beer dinner Nov. 13; reservations requiredwww.pikespeakbrewing.com. See Ad page 13,
- Pikes Peak Genealogical Society, Wed., Nov. 9, 6:30pm Zoom hangout, 7 pm start; 2nd Wednesdays, guests welcome. Usually meets at The Venue, Library 21c 1175 Chapel Hills Drive Colorado Springs (currently only Zoom). Info:ppgsPresident@ppgs.com
- Tri-Lakes Monument radio Association, Details: Contact Bob Witte, 719-659-3727.
- Covered Treasures Bookstore, Sat., Nov. 5, 11-3, artists, Linda Parobek and Beth Ove (11-1), authors, GaGa Gabardi and Judilee Butler(1-3) sign Phoebe Korneal Cozy Mystery series. Sat., Nov. 26, 1-3. Small Business Saturday: Barbara Bowen signs Ballistics at the Ballet and Valerie Niemergl signs Elly Uncomposed. Sat., Dec. 3, 1-3. Small Town Christmas. Heidi Koland, If I Could Ride a Train. 105 Second Street, Monument.
- Tri Lakes Women's Club monthly meeting. Wed., Nov. 9, 11:30 am, Speaker: Matt Mayberry, Director, Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum, Heritage of the Pikes Peak region, upcoming projects. Eisenhower Golf Club, USAFA, 3170 Golf Course Rd. TLWC members. To join: membership@tlwc.net
- MVEA High Schoolers, Summer Trip contest. Deadline Nov. 10. College scholarships contact Erica Meyer, 719-494-2654. See ad on page 9.
- Holiday boutique & Bake sale, St Peter Catholic Church Sat., Nov. 12, 9:00 -3:00 p.m. 124 1st Street, Monument.See Ad page 2,
- Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce, Networking, Nonprofit night, Tue., Nov. 15, 5 pm-7:00 pm, members free, \$15 for non-members. Details: www.trilakes-

- chamber.com. 719-481-3282.
- Fundraiser for Friends of Fox Run Park Wed., Nov.16, Green District Salads, 7 Spectrum Loop, Suite 110. 30% of sales from 3 - 7 pm donated to Friends of Fox Run Park to build trails, nature education, more. Info: friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com
- FriendsGive! Wed., Nov. 16, Tri-Lakes Cares, Trails & Open Space Coalition, Paws N Hooves, and Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates. Door prizes, make donations, tastings (alcohol and non-alcohol), hors d'oeuvres, music by Black Rose Acoustic Society. Black Forest Community Club, 12530 Black Forest Road, Black Forest, CO 80908
- Palmer Lake Historical Society, Thu., Nov.17; doors open 6:30, 7:00 pm meeting. Honoring veterans, Jim Sawatzki will present his film, The Life and Times of General William Jackson Palmer, Civil War hero, Palmer Lake namesake. Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent St.
- Tri-Lakes Women's Club, Joys of the Season holiday home tour Fri. and Sat. Nov.18-19, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Info: www.joysoftheseasonht.org. See ad on page 2.
- Bearbotics' MITEE Gobble Squabble, Sat, Nov. 19, 10-2pm. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. Robot demonstrations & scrimmage matches. Food concessions, merchandise fundraising. Grace Best, 55 Adams St. More information: enable@monumentalimpact.org. See ad on page
- YMCA 5K race series, one great cause. Turkey Trot Thu., Nov. 24, Jungle jog Sat., Dec. 10. Stroller and dog friendly. See ad on page 6.
- Small business Saturday Sat., Nov. 26, historic downtown Monument, See Ad page 11,
- Alpaca holiday extravaganza, Sat. & Sun., Nov. 26, 27. Sa- 9:00 to 5:00 pm, Sun. 10:00 - 4:00 pm. Southeastern Colorado alpaca breeders 17th annual extravaganza: meet alpacas, experience the luxury of alpaca garments, fashion and accessories.Black Forest Community Club, 12350 Black Forest Road North of Shoup Rd. See ad page 7,
- MVEA outdoor power equipment giveaway entry deadline, Mon, Nov. 30. Details: www.mvea.coop/ greengiveaway.
- MVEA co-op connections member benefit program. Find discounts from local merchants. See ad page 9,
- A Better Hearing Center, free hearing screenings through Nov. 30, 574 W. Hwy 105. Monument. .
- Affordableflooring connection special offers through Nov. 30, see ad on page 2
- Cornerstone Cleaners, special offers through Nov. 30. 1030 W. Baptist Road, near King Soopers. See ad on page 4.
- Eagle Wine & Spirits, special offers through Nov. 30. Baptist Road next to King Soopers. See ad on page 3.
- Monument Cleaners, special offers through Nov. 30. 15932 Jackson Creek Pkwy., in Monument Marketplace. See ad on page 5.
- Monumental Med Spa, special offers through Nov. 30; at the loft, 4 Hwyr. 105 Palmer Lake. See ad on page 7.
- Noel Relief Centers, new patient special. 950 Baptist Rd #130, Monument. See ad on page 7.
- Pure Romance by Amy Yocum-Vos, special offers through Nov. 30. www.pureromance.com/AmyYocum-vos. See ad on page 4.
- The Living Room Plants, special offers through Nov. **30**. 12229 Voyager Pkwy, Suite 100. See ad on page 5.
- YMCA fall sports sign up now, www.ppymca.org/ sports. See ad on page 6.
- Monument Hill Kiwanis Club 16th Annual North Pole at Tri-Lakes Arts and Crafts Fair. Sat, Dec, 3,

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

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

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

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

- 9-4pm, Grace Best Education Center, 66 Jefferson Street. See ad page 16,
- New Fangled Nutcracker Sat., Dec. 10, 5:00 p.m. Ent center for the arts. See ad 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 or Our Community News, P.O. Box 1742, Monument, Colorado 80132.

#### **Letters to Our Community**

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

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

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

#### Look for our next issue Saturday, Dec. 3

Ad space reservations due: Fri., Nov. 11 Finished ad artwork due: Fri., Nov. 18 Letters to the editor due: Fri., Nov. 18 Calendar items due: Fri., Nov. 25

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



OCN is published on the first Saturday of each month by Colorado Cooperative Association Our Community News, Inc. John Heiser, President (719) 488-3455—FAX: (828) 649-2720

Advertising: ads@ocn.me Back issues: www.ocn.me Editorial content: editor@ocn.me Event information: calendar@ocn.me

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## Support Our Community. Shop Tri-Lakes and Black Forest!

#### 34 years experience - LOCAL MONUMENT ROOFER







#### Damaging Hail

Recent hail storms dropped 1.5"-1.75" hail that damaged many roofs in the area.

#### Deadline to file insurance claim

You must file insurance claims within **one year** of the storm date to qualify for insurance to cover the cost of your roof replacement.

#### We Offer

- Free Upgrade to Impact Resistance Class 4 shingles
- Military Discounts

The Breashears team will handle all the correspondance with your insurance company to make sure you get a fair settlement to cover all related cost and to make sure you get paid on time.

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## Looking to BUY a Home?

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FREE mortgage education Sat., Nov. 5, at the Tri-Lakes Chamber office, 166 Second St. Monument! We now serve Colorado and California!



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