

# Our Community News

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Issue #261 — Volume 22 Number 12 — Saturday, December 3, 2022

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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.**

- **Our Community News mailing day, Thu., Dec. 1, Jan. 5**, approx. 9 am–2 pm. Information on page 29.
- **Small Town Christmas**, Sat., Dec. 3, 10 am–6 pm, see ad on page 2.
- **Monument Hill Kiwanis Club 16th Annual North Pole at Tri-Lakes Arts and Crafts Fair**, Sat, Dec, 3, 9–4 pm
- **A Christmas Carol play**, Fri.-Sat., Dec. 9–10, 7 pm, (plus 2 pm on Dec. 10), see ad on page 9
- **YMCA 5K race series, Jingle jog**, Sat., Dec. 10
- **89th Annual Palmer Lake Yule Log Hunt**, Sun., Dec. 11, 1–3 pm
- **Christmas concert by Soli Deo Gloria Choir**, Vivaldi *Gloria* concert, Sat. Dec. 17, 3 pm
- **20th annual Tri-Lakes Music Association Christmas Cantata!** Fri.-Sun., Dec. 16, 17, 7 pm; Sun. Dec.18, 2 pm, see ad on page 11
- **Hometown Christmas concert**, Sat./ Dec. 17, 5:30 pm, Black Forest Community Club.
- **FriendsGive!** Wed., Dec. 21, Black Forest Community Club.
- **Palmer Lake Outdoor Classic youth hockey day**, Fri., Jan. 6, 6 pm face-off, Sat., Jan. 7, 9 am, on Palmer Lake.

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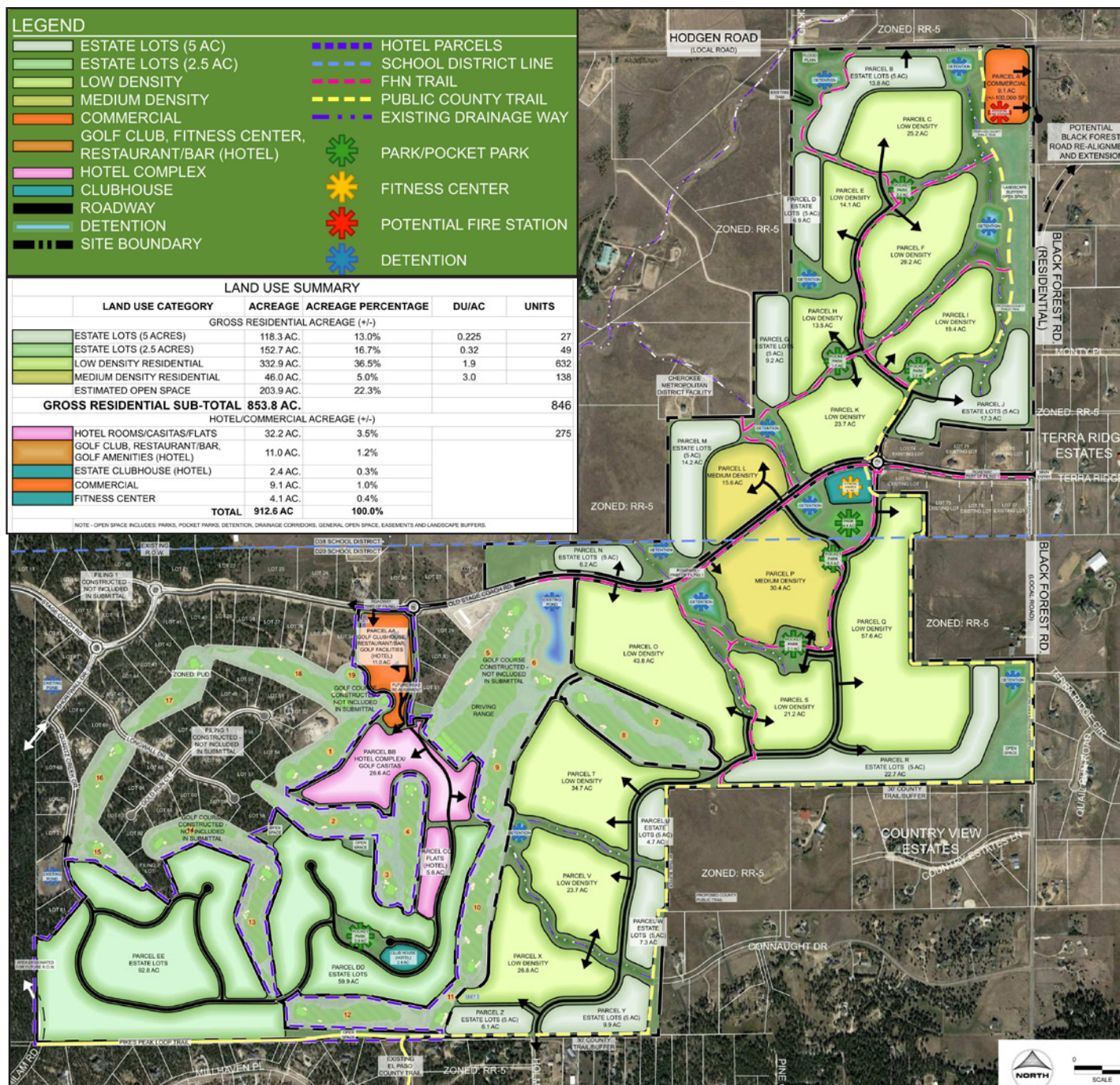
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### Circulation

Print Run: 22,420  
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Stacks: 690

*El Paso Board of County Commissioners, Nov. 1, 8, and 15*

## County approves sketch plan for 846 homes and a luxury hotel resort in Black Forest



**Above:** On Nov. 15, the El Paso County Board of County Commissioners voted 3-1 to approve the Flying Horse North sketch plan shown above. The property is at the southwest corner of Hodgen and Black Forest Roads and continues south to incorporate land on the north and south sides of Old Stagecoach Road. *Graphic courtesy El Paso County.*

*By Helen Walklett*

At the Nov. 15 El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) land use meeting, the commissioners voted 3-1 to approve the Flying Horse North sketch plan. The vote took place without the participation of Commissioner Holly Williams who represents District 1; she recused herself stating she had had a conversation that gave her concerns about her ability to hear the matter fairly.

During November, the commissioners also gave final direction on the

2023 budget and made decisions relating to a special use application for a minor kennel in Woodmoor and a minor subdivision in Black Forest.

### Flying Horse North sketch plan approved with increase in density

At the Nov. 15 BOCC land use meeting, which lasted into the evening, the commissioners voted 3-1 to approve the Flying Horse North sketch plan whose proposals include 846 single-family homes and a luxury hotel resort on

912 acres in Black Forest. The property is at the southwest corner of Hodgen and Black Forest Roads and continues south to incorporate land on the north and south sides of Old Stagecoach Road.

The application was heard at the El Paso County Planning Commission on Nov. 3, where the vote was tied 4-4, meaning that the application came to the BOCC without a recommendation. *See EPCPC article on page 6.*

**COUNTY (Cont. on 2)**

*Monument Board of Trustees, Nov. 7 and 21*

## Annexation action delayed; election results portent change in direction

*By Chris Jeub*

Anticipating a large turnout the day before the 2022 election, the Monument Board of Trustees (BOT) met at The Monument Community Presbyterian Church on Nov. 7. The BOT reviewed the budget, voted on annexations, and prepared to replace the interim town

attorney while hearing from a contentious crowd over concerns of the direction of the trustees. The election on Nov. 8 filled all four open seats with new trustees as well as a new mayor (results detailed below). The second meeting of the month on Nov. 21 was met with very little public comment.

### Budget

Monument's Director of Finance Mona Hirjoi presented 2022 budget numbers and explained updates to the general fund and the 2A water fund. General fund changes included a 4% increase

**MONUMENT (Cont. on 7)**



COUNTY (Cont. from 1)

The proposals

The current zoning for the property allowed for 283 single-family homes, 80 of which were built in Filing No. 1 with Filing No. 2 consisting of one lot. See

[www.ocn.me/v18n10.htm#epbocc](http://www.ocn.me/v18n10.htm#epbocc).

The sketch plan application proposes 846 homes, an increase of 644 on the 202 that currently have approval. The proposed property's densities would range from one unit per 5 acres to 3 units per acre, with lower den-

sity areas around the perimeter of the property to act as a buffer with the surrounding area. The smaller lots would be internal to the site with a minimum lot size of 0.25 acres.

The sketch plan includes plans for a luxury hotel resort with 275 rooms, to include 50 branded flats and golf casitas. Two other commercial areas are proposed. One north of the hotel site, near the existing temporary golf clubhouse, would have a new clubhouse, restaurant/bar, and other golf amenities. The other, at the northeast corner of the development near Black Forest and Hodgen Roads, would be for general commercial use and would also be the site for a potential fire station. The plan also proposes almost 204 acres of open space, which represents 22% of the property. This is in addition to the existing golf course.

Phil Stuepfert, HR Green Development LLC, on behalf of the owner, PRI #2 LLC, c/o Elite Properties of America, and Flying Horse Country Club LLC, said the project meets the review criteria and meets most of the goals and

policies of the county master plan, which does not require that every item be met. He said traffic improvements would be made as required and that the hotel aligns with county's tourism goals.

Water

Alan Hill, attorney, Hill & Pollock LLC, said the question of water quality, quantity, and dependability is not really an issue at the sketch plan stage. He said a specific plan for water supply would be part of any future preliminary plan application, stating, "The additional lots that would be approved in this development plus the hotel and other [commercial parts] would be served by a municipal system that would be supplied by the portfolio of water rights held by Cherokee [Metropolitan District], or Falcon Area Water [and Wastewater] Authority, or perhaps Triview [Metropolitan District] and negotiations are ongoing." The burden is on the developer to prove water sufficiency at the preliminary plan or even final plat stage.

Possible annexation

Stuepfert said one point raised during the neighborhood meetings was that residents in Filing 1 felt the developer had not been forthcoming about possible increased density and hotel plans for the rest of the property. He said that all lot purchasers signed a disclosure notifying them that this proposal might occur. This read, "If annexed into the City, the Undeveloped Property would likely include higher density lots and some commercial parcels that may result in increased density and traffic in the area, including potentially a hotel development."

Commissioner Longinos Gonzalez Jr. pointed out that the property is not annexed into the city. Stuepfert replied that there is potential for annexation. Gonzalez asked, "So when this was approved at the county before, did you have the intent to expand when you asked for permission the first time?" Drew Balsick, president/ project man-

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ager, Flying Horse Development LLC, said “This is just a disclosure so people know what’s going on. We weren’t asked to annexe. We were told, hey there’s an IGA (intergovernmental agreement) between the city and the county and you guys need to be aware of that.” Gonzalez said, “This is not an irrelevant question. When this request was made and requested for approval, for the county years ago, was the intention to come back to the county to expand after it was already approved?” Balsick replied yes.

Doug Stimple, CEO, Classic Homes, who is not a part of the current sketch plan application, said that what Balsick had said was accurate but needed some context. He explained that the original process for approval of Flying Horse North had been a lengthy one, taking around three years. During that time, when they did not know what the outcome would be, discussions initiated by the city about whether they would be supportive of possible annexation and the development of a hotel had taken place. He said the disclosure was to make potential purchasers aware that discussions had taken place with the city about changing the character of the underlying sketch plan. He said exploratory talks about resubmitting an amended sketch plan only

took place with the county after the city said last year that annexation was not viable at this time. He said, “We did it for transparency.”

In the public comment part of the hearing, Philip Shecter, a Flying Horse North resident, referred to the disclosure and remarked that it was dated days after BOCC’s approval of the preliminary plan on Sept. 4, 2018. He told the commissioners, “I think you’ve been taken advantage of. I think the wool’s been pulled over your eyes just like it was over mine and others.”

During rebuttal, Stimple said, “To suggest that in 2016 when we got our PUD [planned unit development] that we had any idea we were going to be coming back and proposing something different is disingenuous and wrong.” He continued, “I’d submit we’re the only development company I know that would have gone to people who are under contract, who were ready to give us their money, and said, ‘Hey we don’t have any idea but you need to know we’re having these conversations,’ and then let them decide if they want to close.” See [www.ocn.me/v17n1.htm#bocc](http://www.ocn.me/v17n1.htm#bocc), [www.ocn.me/v18n10.htm#epbocc](http://www.ocn.me/v18n10.htm#epbocc).

**Public objections**

Objections raised by residents at the meeting focused on the plan’s non-compliance with the master plan, particularly

with regard to its guidance for a large-lot residential placetype classification and its incompatibility with the surrounding area. Water availability, deforestation, increased traffic, noise, and light pollution were also raised as concerns.

Kathleen Shecter, a resident of Flying Horse North and representing fellow residents, said the proposals made a mockery of the county’s master plan and that if the master plan were disregarded, it would strip away predictability for existing and future landowners. She read a statement on behalf of Amy Phillips, a past chair of the Black Forest Land Use Committee (BFLUC), warning that increased density would result

in less permeable surfaces to soak into the ground, creating increased runoff which with water having less chance

# Fuel Church

**Location:** Meeting at Mountain Community Mennonite Church  
643 State Highway 105, Palmer Lake

**TIME:** Sunday Service in-person at 11:00am  
Live service streaming on [fuelchurch.org](http://fuelchurch.org) at 11:40am

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increases the drainage demands for the area. Phillips spoke similarly at the Planning Commission meeting.

Terry Stokka, chairman, BFLUC, and president, Friends of Black Forest, said he had had responses in support of his objections from almost 700 of the Friends' members. He likened the development to a small town being created in Black Forest with the streetlights, sidewalks, and other things that a small town brings. He said the proposals represented a gross zoning change and that traffic would increase fivefold compared to the original plan.

Kristi Correa, a member of Cathedral Pines Homeowners Association's Board of Directors, stated that the hotel proposals violated the master plan's large-

lot residential guidance on commercial uses as it is not small scale, does not meet the general needs of the local community, and is not planned to be on a major roadway. She asked, "What is the purpose of having a master plan if we don't abide by it?"

There was also discussion of a possible agreement between the Wismer family, who sold the property for development (it was part of Shamrock Ranch), and the developer that the lots would be 5 acres. Stimple said that to the best of his knowledge, there was nothing in the sale agreement that would have precluded the application. Calling a point of order, a member of the public said the matter had been brought up at one of the community meetings and Wismer's daughter had spoken emotionally about it. Balsick confirmed comments were made but stated there was nothing contractual.

**Commissioners' deliberations**

Commissioner Carrie Geitner asked if it were a possibility that the project could move forward with the city via annexation where density could be higher. Stimple replied that there was no path forward in the city at this time due to its water constraints but that he doubted that would be the situation forever. The area is shown as a potential annexation area in the county's master plan and the city's annexation plan. The lone no vote was Gonzalez, who found the hotel to be inconsistent with the master plan. He had earlier confirmed with Ryan Howser, AICP planner III, Planning and Community Development Department, that the staff's analysis was that tourism commercial,

as the hotel is classified, is not a recognized land use in the large-lot residential placetype category in the master plan.

Commissioners Geitner and Cami Bremer both referred to respecting private property rights in their comments. Geitner, who made the motion to approve, said, "I'm very much hands off when it comes to how government tells people how to use their property and so when I look at the master plan, I don't ever want to be in a place where we just put labels on land all around the county and we say this is what you're going to build." She said she found the application in general conformance with the master plan and feared that if the project did not go ahead under the county, it would be developed at some point via annexation by the city at a much greater density.

Describing it as a difficult decision and seconding, Bremer said, "I am landing on the side of private property rights with this." Gonzalez commented that he hadn't heard any justification for the hotel in their comments. He said, "I know the master plan is a guide but if we're not going to follow it ever, why do we have it?"

Commissioner Stan VanderWerf, describing a sketch plan as the beginning of a lot of negotiation, said, "This is one of the biggest, most contentious ones [applications] I've had the opportunity to deliberate on. I encourage the developer to continue to work with the neighbors and the constituents and the associations and so forth that are here, that came here in force."

Next steps

A sketch plan is only a required step in the subdivision process for more complex, large-scale types of development that have multiple parts to them. They are seen as a conceptual review of feasibility and design. Now that this sketch plan has been approved, the next step will be for the applicant to come back with a preliminary plan application. An amended PUD will also be needed for density changes, something which is normally reviewed concurrently.

2023 proposed budget includes parks work

At the Nov. 15 regular BOCC meeting, the commissioners gave their final direction on the 2023 budget, accepting proposals put forward by Nikki Simmons, chief financial officer. She explained that revised estimates of spendable funding meant the staff was proposing a \$9 million change in the amount that could be appropriated.

Simmons proposed adding \$1.23 million to reserves and allocating an additional \$6 million in one-time funding to the road and bridge budget, bringing funding there to \$16 million. \$1 million would go to the Parks and Recreation capital budget and would specifically go toward the funding of the Northern Nature Center at Fox Run Regional Park. In addition, \$250,000 would go to Parks and Recreation for wildfire mitigation work for The Pineries Open Space, Black Forest Regional Park, and Fountain Creek Regional Park and would be used as matching funds, allowing \$500,000 of fire mitigation to be done in those parks. Funding would also go to the Department of Public Works to allow it to upgrade gates at certain works yards, to IT for upgrades at the District Attorney's Office, and to Planning and Community Development for homeless camp and code enforcement cleanup.

Geitner commented, "These are all very core priorities to our function as government and so I am proud that we are prioritizing these things and making sure we are prepared for the future." VanderWerf

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said, "This budget just continues to put us in a healthier position for what may come over the next couple of years with regard to the economy."

The final budget vote will be held at the BOCC meeting on Dec. 6.

### Special use applications

Two special use applications, heard by the Planning Commission at its Oct. 20 meeting and which came to the BOCC with recommendations for approval, were scheduled to be heard at the BOCC Nov. 1 land use meeting. The application from Mark and Anne Seglem of Fairplay Drive in Woodmoor for approval of a minor kennel as a special use went ahead as scheduled. The application by Steve Rael Jr. to legalize the operation of the existing RV and boat storage yard at his Highway 83 property was continued to the Dec. 6 BOCC land use meeting at Rael's request to allow him more time to prepare.

The Seglems' application, arising from a code violation, is to allow for a minor kennel for eight personal dogs at their Woodmoor property where the county rules set a limit of four. It came to the BOCC from the Planning Commission with a recommendation of approval with the added notation that the special use would expire with the sale of the property. See [www.ocn.me/v22n11.htm#epcpc](http://www.ocn.me/v22n11.htm#epcpc).

Seglem told the commissioners that he and his wife moved into the house in August 2007 and were not aware of the limit. He stressed that they had no intention of operating as a commercial kennel, saying, "We just want to keep our elderly dogs with us until they pass." He said that based on longevity, they would likely be down to three dogs within four to five years and would not replace those that pass.

During public comment, no one spoke in favor, four spoke in opposition. Brian Bush, president, Woodmoor Improvement Association, said that under its rules you may have domestic pets but not ones that cause a nuisance and its number limit mirrors that of the county. Asking the commissioners to disapprove the application, he stated the association intends to pursue covenant enforcement for a nuisance. Neighbors spoke of numerous complaints to both the Seglums and county about the barking.

Responding, Seglum said, "We are conflating two issues here. One is for us to be able to keep our eight dogs. One is the concern about the nuisance."

VanderWerf implored the Seglums to work with their neighbors to address the barking nuisance but saw the special use application as a separate matter to bring the applicant into compliance with county rules.

The commissioners voted 4-1 to approve the special use, which will apply until such time as the property is sold. Williams was the no vote, saying the special use was not in harmony with the neighborhood.

### Boyd minor subdivision

At the Nov. 15 BOCC land use meeting, the commissioners approved a request by David Gorman for approval of a minor subdivision to create three single-family residential lots. The 35.88-acre property, owned by Christopher and Jessica Boyd, is zoned RR-5 (residential rural) and located directly southeast of the intersection of Brown Road and Running Horse View about two miles north of the intersection of Thompson and Hodgen Roads.

All three lots will exceed the minimum lot size requirement of 5 acres; two lots will be 10 acres each and the third will be 15 acres. The property has been used as agricultural grazing land in the past and is currently vacant with no existing residence or other structures. The applicants are not planning to construct any new structures at this time.

The application was heard at the Nov. 3 Planning Commission meeting and came to the BOCC with a recommendation for approval. It was approved as a consent item, meaning there was no discussion.

### Tri-Lakes Cares/Crossfire Ministries update

At the Nov. 8 meeting, Tri-Lakes Cares and Crossfire Ministries updated the commissioners on work the two nonprofits are doing with grant money jointly received from the BOCC under the Community Investment Program. Haley Chapin, executive director, Tri-Lakes Cares, said the two organizations had been collaborating with a joint application for the funding for the past two years and would continue to do so moving forward.

Tri-Lakes Cares helped 1,227 individuals with food distribution, maintaining housing, utilities assistance, transportation help, or medical assistance in 2021-22. Renee Beebe, executive director, Crossfire Ministries, said her organization had been able to help 20,143 families. She said they were seeing a major increase in the need for their services. Chapin said that the need for her organization's help increased during COVID and that that need was not yet back to pre-pandemic levels, adding, "The people we serve are the first to be impacted by an economic downturn and will be the last to recover." Both remarked that the unrestricted nature of the Community Investment Funding grant gave them the flexibility to best serve those in need.

Each nonprofit received \$10,000 in grant funding. The partners are applying again for funding and are asking for \$50,000, which they would split evenly. See <https://tri-lakescares.org/>, [www.crossfireministries.org](http://www.crossfireministries.org).

\*\*\*\*\*

The El Paso County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) regular meeting is usually held every Tue., 9 am, Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade Ave., Suite 150, Colorado Springs, CO 80903. Please note there is no meeting scheduled for Dec. 13 or 27. View agendas and meetings at [www.agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso](http://www.agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso). BOCC land use meetings are currently held the first and third Tuesday of each month as needed at 1 pm. For information, call 719-520-6430.

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

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El Paso County Planning Commission, Nov. 3 and 17

Commissioners deadlocked in

Flying Horse North sketch plan vote

By Helen Walklett

At the Nov. 3 El Paso County Planning Commission meeting, the commissioners heard the Flying Horse North sketch plan application. A rezoning request for a Monument Hill Road property, due to be heard at the Nov. 17 meeting, was withdrawn indefinitely at the meeting.

**Flying Horse North sketch plan**

A couple of weeks before the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approved the sketch plan for Flying Horse North (see BOCC article on page 1), the application was heard by The Planning Commission at a hearing attended by around 100 members of the public. The commissioners were left tied 4-4 after the vote. This meant the application went to BOCC without any formal recommendation from the commission.

Phil Stuepfert, HR Green Development LLC, on behalf of owner PRI #2 LLC, c/o Elite Properties of America and Flying Horse Country Club LLC, said each project does not have to be in conformance or fully consistent with each applicable component of the master plan, stating, "We are in compliance with the majority of the master plan." He also stated that the plan was compatible with the surrounding area with the proposed larger lots on the outside providing a buffer between surrounding communities and the smaller, internal lots.

During the public comment part of the hearing, objections were raised on the grounds of compatibility with the surrounding area and conformance with the master plan. Concerns were also raised about traffic and water availability. Some residents donated their allotted three minutes to allow other speakers to give longer, more detailed presentations.

Rick Stauch, a 15-year Cathedral Pines resident and vice president of the Cathedral Pines Metropolitan District Board of Directors, representing the metropolitan district, Cathedral Pines Homeowners Association, and residents from the surrounding area, stated the master plan identifies Black Forest as large-lot residential "placetype" and that the propos-

als violate this placetype's densities. He said the area was surrounded by established large acre lots and commented, "What this proposal does is it creates an island of 380 acres of suburban residential placetype completely surrounded by large-lot residential."

Stauch said the hotel, golf club, and restaurant violated the master plan's guidance for commercial uses in large-lot residential placetype areas by neither providing a service meeting the general needs of the community nor being located on a major roadway. He said although the master plan is general in nature, it provides very specific guidance for Black Forest which the proposal ignores.

Terry Stokka, chairman of the Black Forest Land Use Committee and president of the Friends of Black Forest, described the proposals as wrought with violations and implored the commissioners to deny the application. He said, "We believe that this seriously erodes the validity of the county master plan. If it's going to be written, why not follow it?" He warned, "The plan would establish a town of up to 4,000 people and a town like that's going to have street lights and lawns and everything that are characteristic of a town but certainly not characteristic of country."

When discussion came back to the dais, Commissioner Becky Fuller was first to state she would be voting no, saying, "I think that large lot residential does not meet the criteria of having a big hotel there. The currently approved PUD is compatible. 2.5-acre lots. It all makes sense." Commissioner Tim Trowbridge also voiced concerns, finding the proposals not to be in conformance with the master plan. He said, "It's a minimal change area in the plan and this is not minimal change."

Commissioner Thomas Bailey disagreed, saying, "I think the master plan absolutely anticipates something like this and certainly there's enough reason to support, especially at this level, a sketch plan that pursues this kind of development. He commented on the landowner's right to use or pursue the use of their land the best way they see fit.

Making a motion to approve, Commissioner Sara Jack said, "This is a sketch plan, it's a concept plan. There will be a lot of work ahead for the developer and the community, and my experience with this developer is they will continue to work with the community."

The vote was tied 4-4. Commissioner Jay Carlson, Commissioner Eric Moraes, Fuller, and Trowbridge were the no votes. Commissioner Bryce Schuettelpelz, Commissioner Brian Risley, Bailey, and Jack voted aye. Commissioners Joan Lucia-Treese and Brandy Merriam were absent. Commissioner Christopher Whitney recused himself ahead of the hearing be-

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cause he lives directly across Black Forest Road from Flying Horse North.

The application went on to be heard at the BOCC land use meeting on Nov. 15. See BOCC article on page 1.

Monument Hill Road property rezoning withdrawn

At the Nov. 17 meeting, the commissioners were due to hear a rezoning application by Greater Europe Mission for its 15.2-acre property at the northeast intersection of Monument Hill Road and Deer Creek Road. The request was to rezone the parcel from CC (commer-

cial community) to RM-30 (residential, multi-dwelling). However, the application was withdrawn indefinitely when it was reached on the agenda. No explanation was given. The applicant had intended to develop 264 multi-family units in 21 buildings on the site.

\*\*\*\*\*

The El Paso County Planning Commission normally meets the first Thursday and, if required, the third Thursday of each month, at the Regional Development Center, 2880 International Circle, Colo. Springs. Meetings are live-

MONUMENT (Cont. from 1)

for health insurance, down from a 10% increase the year earlier. The fund balance currently sits at \$1.24 million for 2023. After Hirjoi detailed a spreadsheet with more specific numbers, Mayor Don Wilson considered the workshop concluded. Trustee Jim Romanello expressed that he “really appreciated the consensus among the trustees” and Trustee Mitch LaKind added, “I’m glad the numbers are up.”

Monument Ridge West and East annexations

The BOT discussed Resolution No. 81-2022: A Resolution Setting Forth Findings of Fact Regarding the Proposed Annexation of a Parcel of Land to the Town of Monument Known as Monument Ridge West and Monument Ridge East. The board voted to continue the discussion later by a vote of 7-0.

The original hearing before the Board of Trustees on Sept. 19, 2022, established that the proposed area is eligible for annexation. Nov. 7 was set for public hearing to further consider the annexation agreement. Interim Town Attorney Joseph Rivera explained that Monument Ridge West and East desired annexation into the town and the town staff approved. The annexation needs to proceed to the town Planning Commission to work out more details. Deny or continue were the two options left for the board after community input and proper public notification.

Interim Planner Shawn Snow gave the presentation for annexations. Site locations include west of I-25 (91 acres) and east of I-25 (71 acres). The West site

includes a “flag-pole” section that begins about where Eighth Street meets I-25 just south of Monument Meadows Mobile Home Park. The statute required a “community of interest” between the property’s planned use and the town. El Paso County currently has this property zoned primarily for commercial use. The applicant proposes a zoning designation of Residential Attached (RA) for the majority of the site—a land use that allows for a mix of housing options, including single-family and multi-family housing—with a height limit of 35 feet. A smaller parcel at the southwest corner of I-25 and Palmer Divide Road is envisioned as Commercial Center (CC) zoning. Staff concluded that the proposed project meets all requirements and addresses all criteria.

Several neighbors of the proposed annexations expressed concern. Paul Strange said he submitted a letter of protest signed by all neighbors of the annexation. Ken Kimple spoke against the annexation for what he claimed to be too many uncertainties of the community impact of the proposal. He said the developer wanted annexation to “make it easier to push through the town rather than the county.” Steve King expressed that the rezoning is not compatible with the topography. “Anyone who walks the lot would agree that this should be large-lot residential.” He also called for rezoning to be put off for an additional 90 days after annexation to bring in more community input. (Both Kimple and King were elected to the BOT on Nov. 8.)

Other concerns included too many

streamed on the El Paso County News & Information Channel at [www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel](http://www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel). Information is available at <https://planningdevelopment.elpasoco.com> and by calling 719-520-6300.

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apartments being built, impact to Preble’s meadow jumping mouse habitat and other wildlife, traffic, infrastructure, water, and the communications tower on the property. A representative for the applicant replied to many of these concerns. He reiterated the commitments they have already made concerning multi-family housing and density. They have agreed to no apartments and no high-density residences adjacent to other neighborhoods. There are still many conversations and additional modifications to be made after the Planning Commission meeting.

Before voting to table the discussion, Trustee Redmond Ramos asked if the applicant would commit to single-family homes only, to which the applicant said no. LaKind asked about the communication between the developer and the staff. (Ramos was elected to continue on the BOT and LaKind was elected mayor on Nov. 8.)

**Legal services agreement**  
The BOT passed Resolution No. 82-2022: A Resolution Authorizing the Mayor to Enter Into a Legal Services Agreement Between the Town of Monument and Hoffmann, Parker, Wilson & Carberry P.C. The resolution passed 4-3. Mayor Pro Tem Kelly Elliott, Darcy

Schoening, and Ron Stephens dissented.  
As Interim Town Attorney Rivera has requested his release, Town Manager Mike Foreman proposed that Rivera be replaced by the firm of Hoffman, Parker, Wilson & Carberry. Schoening said she would be “very against” moving forward with the firm. Elliott asked how this firm was selected, and Foreman said it was the only firm of five that responded with interest. LaKind disagreed with Schoening’s disapproval and recommended the board move forward with the law firm. Ramos asked if affordability was the issue for opposition, and Foreman said the town could afford a law firm.

**Public comments on the eve of election**  
Some public comments expressed appreciation for the service of the mayor and trustees, but several expressed anger. Two recesses were called during the comments due to citizens refusing to limit their time at the podium.  
Nancy Forenger thanked Mayor Don Wilson and Mayor Pro Tem Elliott for working for the town and for serving admirably but concluded that “it’s a pretty sad day when you can’t get five law firms to want to come into town and represent you.” Barbara Knitt

claimed the mayor should have recused himself from previous votes on Classic Homes because he attended a fundraiser organized by the developer. Wilson said he didn’t know who organized the fundraiser. Brandy Turner thanked Trustee Ramos, LaKind, and Schoening for engaging the community for the Home Rule Charter, accusing the rest of refusing to participate. An unidentified participant took issue with Trustee Schoening typing on her phone and called Trustee Elliott a liar for a flier that called Steve King “left wing.”  
Joel Lusby, elected to sit on the Home Rule Charter Commission, thanked the town staff and community members but called on all to bring honor to the town. He accused Elliott of revealing “an agenda” of misleading slogans and propaganda in recent weeks in an attempt to defeat the Home Rule Charter. King asked the trustees to censure Elliott for misinformation and deception, just as Elliott did the year prior to Trustee Laurie Clark (censured in 2021). He ended with, “this is disgusting.” Sana Abbott, elected to a trustee position, quoted Proverbs 10:11-12 and expressed “sadness” about what she claimed were “lies” about her campaign. She then extended her time far over her allotted three minutes to at-

tack several of the trustees.  
**Board comments**  
Trustee Ramos expressed disappointment in the “disgusting smear campaign” against the Home Rule Charter. He said, “everything was positive” until disinformation—an attempt to lie—calling Steve King “left wing,” an “absolute, blatant lie.” He cited quotes from Elliott in 2020 that expressed concern for accurate information, asking for Elliott to apologize for lying. Elliott said she was a registered agent who did not talk with any builders and developers who did not contribute to any of the fliers in question, concluding that she had no reason to apologize. Ramos put forward a motion to censure Elliott, seconded by LaKind. The motion failed 5-2. Mayor Wilson said, “There is a big difference between publishing inaccurate information and being a registered agent; this is some of the most ridiculous conversation I have heard.”

**Election results for Nov. 8**  
The meeting adjourned on the eve of the Nov. 8 election. The results of the election promote Trustee LaKind to mayor by 58.76 to 41.24% of the vote. The four trustee positions that were open were won by the top four candidates on the ballot: Steve King (17.46%), Sana Abbott (15.5%). Redmond Ramos (14.78%), and Kenneth Kimple (12.35%). King, Abbott, and Ramos will serve four-year terms, Kimple will serve a two-year term.

Current Trustee James Romanello and Mayor Pro Tem Kelly Elliott will remain as members. Trustees Schoening and Stephens did not receive enough votes to remain on the board. Jason Gross and Marco Florito were also on the ballot but did not garner the votes to be elected.

Question 2A won with 67.57% of the vote. It read, “Shall the proposed charter, as drafted by the Town of Monument Home Rule Charter Commission, be adopted as the Home Rule Charter for the Town of Monument?” The charter will be the official governing document for the town. All seven members of the council will have one equal vote, though one member will be titled “mayor” and another “mayor pro tem.”

One BOT meeting is scheduled the first Monday of December, and the current BOT will convene the regularly scheduled meeting on Jan. 3. An order of business will be recognizing the outgoing trustees and the mayor. New trustees will be sworn in by the town clerk but will be seated as the new Monument Town Council. A new council vacancy will be announced to replace incoming Mayor LaKind, and the opening will be published by the town staff. The new council will function similarly to the old BOT but will be referred to as a “Town Council” with “councilmembers” instead of “trustees.”

Election results taken from the El Paso County Clerk website at <https://results.enr.clarityelections.com>.

\*\*\*\*\*

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, Dec. 5. The third meeting, scheduled for Monday, Dec. 19, has been cancelled. Call 719-884-8014 or see [www.townof-monument.org](http://www.townof-monument.org) for information. To see upcoming agendas and complete board packets for BOT or to download audio recordings of past meetings, see <http://monumenttownco.minuteson-demand.com> and click on Board of Trustees.

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Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, Nov. 10 and 17

Board adopts new town code, proceeds with retail marijuana

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

The Palmer Lake Board of Trustees held a public hearing and first reading of its new town code on Nov. 10 and unanimously adopted the code on Nov. 17. At the Nov. 17 Local Licensing Authority meeting and subsequent special meeting, the board tackled implementation issues related to the recently passed adult-use cannabis ballot issue. The board also discussed the proposed 2023 budget, voted on four resolutions, and granted four special event permits.

**New town code adopted**  
At the Nov. 10 regular meeting, Mayor Bill Bass reviewed the history of updating the town’s municipal code and opened the public hearing. Trustee Glant Havenar asked that the record reflect that she wanted to hold a public workshop before this reading but that her request was denied. Trustee Darin Dawson reviewed the history in more detail and asked if the town was planning to scrap the \$13,000 investment in recodification of the town code it had made so far. Havenar said she was ready to pass the ordinance with three caveats: she wanted the board to revisit implementing commissioners in January, review each of the 17 code chapters monthly, and revise the language to refer to Palmer Lake as a statutory town rather than a statutory city.

Town Attorney Matt Krob reiterated that the municipal code is a living document, and once adopted the board has the sole authority to make any desired changes. Planning Commissioner Susan Miner, previously on the board, said that the town needs its code to line up with state requirements and that the town cannot move forward with its Master Plan without the new code. Incoming trustees Shana Ball, Kevin Dreher, and Dennis Stern agreed with the direction Havenar proposed.

Bass closed the public hearing and added an agenda item to pass the first reading of Ordinance 16-2022 on adopting and enacting a new town code. Krob explained that the approval and actual adoption of the new town code would happen on the second reading scheduled for Nov. 17. The board unanimously passed the first reading.

On Nov. 17, the board waived the second reading

and unanimously approved the ordinance to adopt the new town code, with Havenar noting the agreement to devote one meeting per month to review the code chapters in precedence order.

Adult-use cannabis implementation

At its Local Licensing Authority meeting, held on Nov. 17 at the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce Community Room due to a scheduling conflict, the board considered a request by Alpine Essentials to modify their premises at 850 A/B Commercial Lane in preparation for serving retail customers. They plan to make interior changes to expand and repurpose their space to serve more customers. The request was unanimously granted.

At the special meeting, the board held a long discussion to review a possible draft ordinance relating to adult-use cannabis. Krob reviewed 10 different codes and found the Leadville code to be the most comprehensive. He noted that some items, like entrances, are dictated by state code which Palmer Lake cannot change.

Havenar noted that the current code requires the businesses to get approval from the Planning Commission, which doesn’t meet until Dec. 21. Then the request for a license would come back to the Board of Trustees in January and it would take at least 60 days to get a license from the state. Since these are known businesses, she asked, why would we make them wait?

Krob advised that the board could direct the staff to amend the existing code to allow retail marijuana sales in the two current locations without going to the Planning Commission and could draft an ordinance that says the businesses can apply for a license but that it would be subject to forthcoming regulations. These changes could be implemented by an emergency ordinance at the next meeting and would be effective upon passage. The board could then hold public workshops on the proposed regulations. Trustee Karen Stuth said she wanted Public Safety to have a chance to review the regulations and confirm they could implement them.

Proposed 2023 budget direction

Bass opened the public hearing, and Deputy Town Clerk

Julia Stambaugh reported that she had made minor changes bringing revenues and expenditures in line and doing some cleanup. In public comments, resident Roger Mosely brought attention to his concerns on over-expenditures in the water fund, calculating that Palmer Lake might need to raise its rates significantly but expressing that he was glad that some rate increases were already approved. Town Administrator Dawn Collins said that typically rates are adopted in January to be effective at the next billing. If the board sees the need to act, it can do so at any time by resolution.

Trustee Jessica Farr said the proposed budget included marijuana funds, and she felt the town shouldn’t propose to use the money when it does not yet have it. Havenar said she wanted the money to go into reserves before planning to spend it. Collins confirmed that was the final direction clarified at the previous meeting. She said the money would not be spent if it does not come in and that expenditures could be reviewed by the board.

Krob noted that some municipalities pass a budget and never look at it, and some review and amend it monthly. Collins said that reviewing and amending it once would be more cost-effective. Havenar suggested reviewing it after the first month of operations of the adult-use cannabis businesses, and Melissa Woodward of Alpine Essentials noted that it would have to be done in executive session since there were fewer than three businesses.

Resolutions passed

The board passed the following resolutions:

- Resolution 53-2022, which adopts the Community Master Plan.
- Resolution 54-2022, which indefinitely approves and supports the annual Yule Log community tradition.

- Resolution 55-2022, which amends the town star lighting policy to include the evening of the annual Hockey Classic.
- Resolution 56-2022, which adopts the town’s 3-mile annexation plan.

Special event permits

The board granted the following event permits:

- Star Lighting and Chili Supper on Saturday, Nov. 26 at 4:30 p.m. at the Town Hall.
- EZ Business Workshop, Wednesday, Nov. 30, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Town Hall.
- A Christmas Carol production on Dec. 9 at 7 p.m. and Dec. 10 at 2 p.m. at the Town Hall.
- “LOVE to Party” Valentine Dinner and Dance on Feb. 11, 2023, from 5 to 10 p.m. at the Town Hall.

\*\*\*\*\*

The next board meeting is scheduled for Dec. 8. See the town’s website at [www.townofpalmerlake.com](http://www.townofpalmerlake.com) to confirm times and dates of board meetings and workshops. Meetings are typically held on the second and fourth

Thursdays of the month at the Town Hall. Information: 719-481-2953.

Correction

In the October issue, we said that Cindy Allen had presented on behalf of the Parks Commission. The correct name is Cindy Powell. OCN regrets the error.

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

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Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, Nov. 17

# Water and sewer rates to rise

By James Howald

At its November meeting, the Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) board heard a presentation proposing future water and sewer rate increases, discussed possible strategies to set rates, and scheduled a public hearing on rate increases. It held a brief public hearing on the draft 2023 budget. The board discussed the appointment of directors to the newly formed Loop Water Authority. Finally, the board heard details of operational reports.

## Rate increases proposed

Harold Smith of Raftelis Financial Consultants, the company WWSD uses to model water and sewer rates, opened the discussion of future rates by saying his analysis addressed how to recover the cost of water and sewer service through 2027. A five-year approach allows changes to be made incrementally rather than suddenly, Smith said.

The cost of required long-range capital improvements was covered in his analysis, he said. On the sewer side, Smith projected \$1.8 million would be needed for back-up power for lift

stations, replacement costs for sewer pipelines, increases to the size of sewer pipelines adjacent to Higby Road, and the relocation of pipelines adjacent to Highway 105. Smith said these projects could be funded with cash. Another \$5.6 million will be needed between 2023 and 2040 for upgrades to the Tri-Lakes Waste Water Treatment Facility that WWSD shares with the towns of Palmer Lake and Monument, he said.

Smith recommended a 2% annual increase in the base sewer charge and the sewer volume charge from 2023 to 2027. That would mean an increase of 66 cents on the base charge and 9 cents per 1,000 gallons of waste produced, he said.

The future is more complicated concerning water, Smith explained, due to the requirements of funding and building the pipeline and treatment facilities required by the Loop project, which will bring water north from Woodmoor Ranch and Fountain Creek for use by WWSD customers.

Smith told the board the Renewable Water Infrastructure Fee, which covers the cost of the debt service on

the money borrowed to purchase the Woodmoor Ranch, could be lowered from \$40 to \$39 in 2023 while still covering debt service.

Smith told the board he estimated that capital improvement projects could be covered with cash until 2028. Smith presented two scenarios for funding the required project: a hybrid model including both Revenue bonds and General Obligation (GO) bonds, which require voter approval, and a model using only GO bonds.

In the first scenario, in 2028 and 2029 WWSD would need to issue \$50 million in Revenue bonds to fund the Loop project pipeline. In 2030 and 2031 the district would need to issue GO bonds to complete the pipeline and build a water polishing facility.

The second scenario would use only GO bonds, to the amount of \$150 million. Smith said these amounts assumed WWSD would pay all the costs of the Loop project, with the other three participating districts paying nothing. Smith said WWSD would need to increase rates by 6% in 2023, by 11% in 2024 through 2028, by 6% in 2029 and

2030, and by 4% in 2031 and 2032 to fund these projects on a “go-it-alone” basis.

Smith explained the debt service for Revenue bonds is paid out of water service rates, while the debt service for GO bonds is paid through property tax increases and must be approved by voters. Revenue bonds do not need to be approved by voters, he said. Smith pointed out that the amount of GO bonds issued can’t exceed 50% of the district’s assessed value, and that limitation made it unlikely that the projects could be funded with only GO bonds. GO bonds limit the impact on water rates, Smith said, but at the cost of requiring voter approval.

Board member Barrie Town pointed out that WWSD would not be funding the Loop project alone and the participation of three other districts would substantially reduce the amount of money that WWSD would need to borrow. Smith agreed the numbers he had presented were a worst-case scenario. District Manager Jessie Shaffer said borrowing less could mean only Revenue bonds would be needed.

Board member Dan Beley asked Shaffer what would happen if voters would not approve any GO bond debt. Shaffer said that would mean significant water restrictions.

Board President Brian Bush pointed out that tap fees were not included in the projections. Beley suggested tap fees should be raised to help finance the needed projects since future development is one of the drivers of increased demand. Board member Jim Wyss said increasing tap fees would not discourage people from building in the district.

Several board members said they thought voters would be reluctant to increase their property taxes to fund water infrastructure.

Shaffer said he did not want to raise rates now based on the assumption that WWSD would be the sole funder of the Loop project. He argued that the future of the Loop project would be clearer in a year or two.

Following the discussion, the board scheduled a public hearing on the proposed rate increases to be held during their next board meeting scheduled for Monday, Dec. 21 at 1 p.m. at the district’s headquarters at 1845 Woodmoor Drive. After the public hearing, the board will make a final decision on rates.

In preparation for the public hearing, the board published “not to exceed” increases to water and sewer fees on the district’s web page. The water base fee for a three-quarter-inch tap will increase from \$10.18 per month to \$10.80 per month. Tier 1 water usage fees (0 to 6,000 gallons) will increase from \$6.45 per 1,000 gallons to \$6.84. Tier 2 fees (6,001 to 25,000 gallons) will increase from \$10.63 to \$11.27 per 1,000 gallons. Tier 3 fees (over 25,000 gallons) will increase from \$17.00 to \$18.03.

A complete list of fees proposed for 2023 can be found at <https://www.woodmoorwater.com/>. Scroll down to find the fee notice and the attachments that detail all the water and sewer rates.

## Hearing for 2023 budget held

The Nov. 17 meeting included a public hearing on the 2023 budget. There were no comments from the public. The budget hearing will remain open until the next board meeting on Dec. 21. Contact the district at 719-488-2525 with any questions or comments on the draft budget.

Shaffer said some line items for



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utility costs were increased due to increased water production and that he would update the draft budget based on the rate discussion.

Directors for Loop project approved

Shaffer asked the board to approve having all the general managers for the districts participating in the Loop project also serve as directors on the Loop

Water Authority. Alternates would be appointed by the general managers. The board unanimously approved the request. The board also authorized Shaffer to spend up to \$10,000 on the Loop project in 2022.

Highlights of operational reports

- The district’s rules and regulations were updated to allow the use of high-density polyethylene

pipe.

- District employees can now accumulate up to 30 hours in their “comp time” bank.
- The Monument Junction West and Cloverleaf developments are putting in water and sewer infrastructure.

\*\*\*\*\*

The next meeting is scheduled for Dec.

21 at 1 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](http://www.woodmoorwater.com) or call 719-488-2525 to verify meeting times and locations.

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

Monument Sanitation District, Nov.16

Board holds the line on rates

By Jackie Burhans and James Howald  
At its November meeting, the Monument Sanitation District (MSD) board voted on a resolution setting rates that will take effect on Jan. 1, 2023. The board also held a public hearing and voted on a resolution to expand the district service area. A hearing on the 2023 budget was held, followed by a vote. The board amended its policy on the Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) program and heard details of operational reports.

Usage rates unchanged

The board voted unanimously to approve Resolution 111162002-2, which leaves usage rates and tap fees unchanged for 2023. District Manager Mark Parker pointed out that a minor adjustment was made to the late fee on commercial accounts, which will now be 5% of the unpaid balance plus the current Federal Reserve Interest Rate. Interest paid will be at the discretion of the district manager.

MSD to serve Monument Ridge West

The November meeting included a hearing on a petition by Monument Ridge West LLC to include the Monument Ridge West property in the MSD service area. Monument Ridge West is west of I-25 and south of County Line Road, with the Wakonda Hills neighborhood at its southern boundary.

Parker said the property met the criteria for inclusion, and the petition had been reviewed by GMS Engineering LLC and Allison Ullmer, the district’s attorney.

There were no comments from the

public and the hearing was closed. The board voted unanimously to approve the order to include Monument Ridge West in the district’s service area.

2023 budget approved

Following a brief public hearing, the board unanimously approved Resolution 11162022-1. The resolution adopts the 2023 budget as presented and appropriates the funds required.

Resolution on FAMLI act amended

At a previous meeting, the MSD board voted against participation in Colorado’s recently passed FAMLI program, which provides paid leave for employees experiencing qualifying life events such as the birth of a child. Individual employees can still opt into the program even if their employer chooses not to participate. At its November meeting, the MSD board voted to amend the resolution to allow the district’s bookkeeping staff to handle the paperwork required for employees who choose to opt into the program.

Highlights of operational reports

- In 2023, the district will raise rents for the tenants in the headquarters building at 130 Second St.
- Outdoor lighting has been installed at the district’s headquarters.
- The district is working on improvements to the courtyard area at the headquarters. The board is asking the community for suggestions to name the courtyard;

details will go out in an attachment to district bills.

\*\*\*\*\*

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 Dec. 21. 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](mailto:jackieburhans@ocn.me). James Howald can be reached at [jameshowald@ocn.me](mailto:jameshowald@ocn.me).

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Donala Water and Sanitation District, Nov. 17

## Holbein plant radium below detectable levels

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

At the November meeting of the Donala Water and Sanitation District (DWSD), the board was updated on radium levels, celebrated the tenure of its former president, and appointed its managing director to the new Loop Water Authority. It also briefly touched on its upcoming draft budget and rate-setting approval.

### Radium levels undetectable

Jeff Hodge, district manager, reported that the second round of testing for the Holbein plant was below detectable levels for radium. This makes two quarters of good results from a certified laboratory. He thanked the board for its approval of the work needed at the plant and noted that it would take some time for the state to approve notifying the public.

Hodge said DWSD would continue using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to implement the use of hydrogen manganese oxide (HMO)

to control radium in the future. DSWD will take samples twice a year from its wells to stay on top of any potentially increasing radium issues.

### Past President Houle honored

Ed Houle, past president and member of the DWSD board since 2000, attended the meeting with his wife Nancy and was honored for his years of service. Houle served DWSD from May 2000 to May 2008 as a board member and again from May 2020 to July 2022 as president. DWSD serves 2,800 single-family equivalent customers, providing over 160 million gallons of potable water and treating over 155 million gallons of wastewater while managing over \$55 million in capital assets. Resolution 2022-3 expresses DWSD's appreciation to Houle for his exceptional performance as a board member and president, including his leadership during the district's COVID-19 pandemic, its response to high radium levels, and its selection of a new general manager,



**Above:** Donala Board Past President Ed Houle was presented by current President Wayne Vanderschuere with a waterdrop-shaped trophy recognizing Houle's years of service to the Donala Water and Sanitation District board. Vanderschuere also thanked Ed's wife, Nancy, for her patience with the hours of work required. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

among other accomplishments. Board President Wayne

Vanderschuere also thanked Nancy for her patience and support during Houle's service.

### Hodge appointed to Loop Water Authority

Hodge asked for a formal motion from the board to appoint him to the newly formed Loop Water Authority (LWA). The LWA is composed of the Town of Monument, Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, Cherokee Metropolitan District, and DWSD. The LWA was formed via an inter-governmental agreement between the participating entities as part of the Loop Project, which will divert water from Fountain Creek and transport it to customers in northern El Paso County. Monument Town Manager Mike Forman said his staff would obtain the required Employer Identification Numbers (EIN) and System for Award Management (SAM) numbers and then set up the account at FirstBank to deposit monies that will be reimbursable through the ARPA grant.

### Draft 2023 budget and rates discussed

DWSD held a workshop on the morning of Nov. 17 ahead of the board meeting to review the 2023 draft budget and provide guidance. The budget will be brought to the board for approval on Dec. 8, along with the rate settings. Hodge noted that DWSD would have a solid budget to hit its revenue and expense targets while allowing it to maintain the level of service it committed to for its customers.

\*\*\*\*\*

The next meeting is scheduled for Dec. 8 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](http://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](mailto:jameshowald@ocn.me). Jackie Burhans can be reached at [jackieburhans@ocn.me](mailto:jackieburhans@ocn.me)*

Triview Metropolitan District, Nov. 17

## Colorado Springs Utilities contract awaiting approval

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Triview Metropolitan District (TMD) meeting on Nov.17, the board heard about Colorado Springs Utilities' (CSU) timeline to approve the contract to convey, treat, and deliver water through the Northern Delivery System (NDS) pipeline; and the board debated over pre-purchasing project materials for the NDS project and pump house equipment.

### Northern Delivery System (NDS) pipeline project update

District Manager James McGrady said the district had met with CSU to discuss the Convey Treat and Deliver water contract, and the review stage is being finalized. CSU will present the contract to the utility board for approval in February and seek final approval from Colorado Springs City Council in March. The contract will be presented

before the board changes in April. The timing sits well with the Northern Delivery System (NDS) pipeline installation, he said.

Water Attorney Chris Cummins of Monson Cummins & Shotet LLC said the Colorado Springs City Council will have an election in April and the current board members are educated in the difference between full-service delivery and convey, treat, and deliver (transportation of another district's water without losing any of their own water). CSU receives revenue by using existing infrastructure and that helps Colorado Springs residents, he said.

### NDS project material purchase

McGrady gave the board a construction schedule for the NDS pipeline project that is expected to commence from Northgate Road, Colorado Springs, travel north along Roller Coaster Road and east

down Baptist Road to Sanctuary Rim Drive in April 2023. The board discussed the pre-purchasing of materials for about \$80,000 in December. The project requires about \$4.5 million in materials and will be completed by Kiewit Infrastructure for an estimated cost of about \$20 million. See [www.ocn.v22n11.htm#tmd](http://www.ocn.v22n11.htm#tmd).

Vice President Anthony Sexton asked Cummins if the district took out a long-term loan for the NDS enterprise, could the future income from water storage leasing be used to pay off the loan.

Cummins confirmed that eventually water storage leasing could be used to pay off the loan for the NDS project, but the district will not have water storage leasing from third parties before 2024-25. Once the reservoir is built in Pueblo County, the interest will be high for third parties to lease water storage, he said.

McGrady said last month

the board had asked for a term sheet for a long-term fixed interest loan for the NDS project, but that had given him pause for thought on whether another loan was necessary. The TMD Enterprise Fund holds about \$20 million, and the General Fund holds about \$6 million to \$7 million, and he recommended the district fund the NDS project with a loan from the General Fund to the Enterprise Fund with a 3% to 4% interest rate, and forget about a short-term loan from another entity, he said.

Jamie Harvey of Kiewit said the design for the pump-house was not finished, but the site development will not begin until late 2023 after the NDS pipeline is installed, and the pumphouse construction will likely begin in early 2024.

Director James Otis said that even though the lead time is 14 months for the pumphouse, procuring materials could take 12 months on some items, particularly pumphouse equipment.

McGrady agreed with Otis and said he intends to have the pumphouse design completed in December in time for the next meeting.

President Mark Melville and Sexton agreed that materials with long lead times should be ordered in December to avoid any project delays.

### Escrow extension agreement

Cummins said the district has about \$300,000 in an escrow account left over from the Stonewall Springs reservoir closing. The escrow was left in the account to acquire an easement for the outlet works

at the east reservoir, but there is no way the easement will cost that much. He recommended releasing \$150,000 of the escrow funds to Stonewall Springs quarry in exchange for another extension until December 2023, and take the time to acquire the easement, he said.

The board directed McGrady to sign the release of funds.

### Financial review

The board unanimously accepted checks over \$5,000.

Treasurer James Barnhart requested an update on tap fees for 2023.

McGrady said there are five or six homebuilders in the area, and 2023 may not be as bleak as previously anticipated for tap fees.

The board unanimously approved the financial report as presented.

### 2022 audit

The board unanimously approved an engagement letter for Haynie and Co. to conduct the district's 2022 Financial Audit for an amount not to exceed \$25,000.

**Public Works and Parks and Open Space update**  
Superintendent Matt Rayno said:

- The snowflakes are beginning to fly and the team is keeping on top of things and ready to move snow.
- A crack and seal asphalt application will be made on Jackson Creek Parkway and Leather Chaps Drive, weather permitting.
- The district is winterized and ready for next season.



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- The Section “C” pipeline for the NDS project is in place and the team is putting Agate Creek Park back together.
  - The Old Creek Park recreation area is the first of five scheduled for replacement next year. The district is planning to replace one per year. Board requests on equipment preferences will be taken into consideration.
  - Five bids per park are anticipated, with a budget of about \$150,000 per park.
  - The district had received one estimate for about \$168,000 from A-to-Z Recreation, Littleton.
- Sexton suggested shade structures and seating for adults be included in the park equipment replacement project.
- Rayno said a concrete pad with steel bench and picnic table and a 10-

to 15-foot-tall shade structure could be installed for about \$10,000 to \$20,000 per park. The district staff would move the turf and sprinklers to lower costs. It would be nice to get folks out of the wind and sun and enjoy a picnic, he said.

**Board director terms limited**

The district’s attorney, George Rowley of White Bear Ankele Tanaka & Waldron Attorneys at Law, Centennial, said the constitution provides term limits for directors serving on special district boards. The term limits apply only to elected four-year terms, allowing two consecutive four-year terms to be served. Interim terms that arise due to a vacancy or elected two-year terms created due to a vacancy do not count. After serving eight years, a di-

rector must wait four years before serving again. If a director resigns part way through a four-year term, it still counts as a full term. Partial terms do not count against the two four-year terms. If someone served two four-year terms, they could still fill a partial term, but the law is set to allow others to serve.

Otis disagreed that a board director could serve two four-year terms and then a two-year term.

Cummins said the two-year term would need to be appointed, but in the past the district was desperate for board members and there were zero interested parties. The board had to appoint existing members just to have a quorum and make decisions. There are others that do want to serve now.

Director Marco Fiorito is term limited and has five to six months left to serve on the board, said Otis.

**Executive session**

The board moved into an executive session at 8 p.m. in accordance with Colorado Revised Statutes 24-6-402(4) (a), (b), and (e), to discuss possible acquisitions, receive legal advice for negotiations regarding water litigation matters, property transactions, and water rights acquisitions instructions to negotiators, and legal advice regarding board interactions with public and private persons and organizations.

\*\*\*\*\*

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 Dec. 13 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](mailto:nataliebarszcz@ocn.me).

Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, Nov. 15

2023 budget approved; Sun Hills station’s future undecided

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) meeting on Nov. 15, the board heard from the Sun Hills Homeowners Association (HOA) members and residents regarding the future of the disused Sun Hills station (formerly DWFPD Station 3). The board also approved the 2023 budget and discussed changes for the 2023 board meeting schedule. A pension board meeting was held after the regular meeting.

Director Mike Forsythe was excused from both meetings.

**2023 budget public hearing**

President Mark Gunderman made a motion to open the public hearing for the 2023 proposed budget. The board received no comments for or against the proposed budget, and closed the public hearing, 4-0.

Fire Chief Andy Kovacs said the proposed 2023 budget shared with the Board of Directors in October is unchanged. There will be significant reductions in the budget to maintain DWFPD as a taxing district. No funds are allocated for a board director election, but funds are budgeted for TABOR, legal fees (increased to \$75,000 in October), insurance, utilities for the Sun Hills station, and workers compensation for the board. The remaining revenue the district receives will be transferred to Monument Fire District for operating costs, said Kovacs. See [www.ocn.me/v22n10.htm#dwfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v22n10.htm#dwfpd).

The district’s attorney, Emily Powell of Ireland Stapleton Pryor Pascoe PC law firm, recommended the board approve the budget subject to the final property tax assessed values that could be slightly different when received in early December. Kovacs will tweak the budget numbers, if necessary, but board interaction will not be necessary, said Powell.

The board approved the 2023 proposed budget as presented, 4-0.

**Note:** Included in the approval was the adoption of 7.17 mills (for the district) and 15.25 mills (for the sub-district) in property tax collection for 2023. The board approved 4-1 a mill levy adjustment to offset a loss of revenue that will occur, due to the state Legislature’s temporary drop in the Residential Assessment Rate for 2023. See [www.ocn.me/v22n11.htm#dwfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v22n11.htm#dwfpd).

**Public comments—Sun Hills property**

Administrative Assistant Stacey Popovich read a message received from resident Steve Simpson, commending Kovacs and the board for meeting with the residents regarding the disposition

of the Sun Hills property, and for listening to concerns and agreeing to find a solution to the problem. See [www.ocn.me/v22n11.htm#dwfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v22n11.htm#dwfpd).

Resident Hants White of Pleasant View Estates (north of Sun Hills Estates) said he and the residents appreciated the board listening and engaging.

Sun Hills HOA board member Nancy Spalding said she had moved to the neighborhood in 1992 when dirt roads existed, and no fire services were available. Thirty years later things have changed, and the residents are thankful that the board and the district are listening to the residents.

**Sun Hills property discussion**

Gunderman said the following concerning the Sun Hills property:

- The board heard from the community at the October board meeting regarding the Sun Hills property and agreed to pause engaging a broker for 30 days to consider other viable options.
- After the meeting, he received several supportive and understanding emails, prompting an informal meeting with board members, the district fire chiefs, and about eight residents.
- The decision to sell or dispose of the property was simply a plan to complete another piece of the merger.
- He had assumed that if the property was sold, someone could give the old station some love and attention and enhance the community, but it became loud and clear that selling the property was not popular with the community.
- The .44-acre property was originally donated by a previous homeowner, and the HOA approved the donation to help the area and allow Wescott to have a presence.
- The district has evolved and the building is not needed anymore, but the sale was never intended to make a profit for the district, it was simply a decision made to be good neighbors.
- It is time to return the favor and be good community partners and look for different ideas for the property.
- He would discuss the ideas forthcoming from the productive community meeting with legal counsel and explore the options throughout 2023.

Treasurer Duane Garrett said some good ideas were presented at the meeting, and the board should explore the viability of those ideas and revisit the options after the merger is complete.

Kovacs said he is a huge communi-

ty advocate and wants to ensure the fire district has a strong relationship with community members. Those relationships will trump the financial benefit of selling the station, and both board and district staff will be very mindful during the decision-making process, he said.

Director Charles Fleece said the district is budgeted for 2023 and finding the right solution for the community will be the best course of action.

Gunderman said options will be explored next year after the November election.

**Financial report**

Secretary Larry Schwarz asked if the

district was due any additional Wildland Reimbursement revenue for 2022.

Popovich said that a brush truck did not deploy on wildland deployments, but all reimbursements had been received by the end of October.

Kovacs said that due to a number of firefighters in training and others attending paramedic school, the number of wildland deployments had been limited until staffing levels increase, and the district in partnership with the Local 4319 decided not to deploy as aggressively in 2022 as in the past.

The board accepted the financial report as presented, 4-0.



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**Bill of sale approved**  
Powell said that 15 minutes after the October meeting it was realized that one document requiring signature was missing. Signing the last bill of sale document was the last action to complete Phase 1 of the merger with Monument Fire District (MFD).

The board approved the final bill of sale, 4-0.

**2023 meeting dates and timing change**

Gunderman proposed the board meet bi-monthly in 2023, at Station 1 (Highway 105), before the MFD board meets on the fourth Wednesday at 4:30 p.m.

The board agreed to the proposed schedule changes.

Popovich said the meeting schedule for 2023 would be approved at the January meet-

ing in accordance with Special District Association rules, and no meeting is scheduled for December 2022.

**Firefighter forum**  
Driver Luke Owens thanked the board for all its hard work. **Note:** Kovacs updated the board with the district's October activity. For information, see the MFD article on page 14 and visit the website listed below for reports.

The regular meeting adjourned at 4:51 p.m.  
\*\*\*\*\*

**Volunteer pension board meeting**

Trustee Mike Badger, attending via Zoom, presented the allocation report to the board and said:

- The pension fund had taken a beating in the stock market, with every

quarter up until the end of September experiencing a constant loss in overall investments.

- The fund is down about \$185,000 compared to previous years. See [www.ocn.me/v22n5.htm#dwfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v22n5.htm#dwfpd).
- The volunteer status changed after the district quit accepting volunteers in readiness for the merger with Monument Fire District.
- There are only two volunteers eligible to draw from the fund when they turn 50.
- Another two volunteer members that had five or nine years of service when the volunteer core was dissolved would be eligible to collect from

the fund if they went to another department and completed 20 years of service.

- Wescott would be responsible for paying a pension to those members for the years served with the department.
- The district pays out \$5,816.25 monthly to active retirees, a total of \$69,795 annually.
- A new actuarial study will be performed in 2023. The study is performed in odd years.

Popovich said the election trustees rotate every other year for two-year terms. All the volunteer retirees receiving a pension are sent a letter in October with the option to self-nominate. Incumbent pension board trustee Bill Lowes was

the only person to self-nominate, so the election will be cancelled.

The pension board meeting adjourned at 5:17 p.m.  
\*\*\*\*\*

Future meetings will precede the Monument Fire District board meeting on the fourth Wednesday of the month at Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Jan. 25 at 4:30 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](http://www.wescottfire.org) or [www.tlm-fire.org](http://www.tlm-fire.org) or contact Administrative Assistant Stacey Popovich at 719-484-9011.

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

Monument Fire District, Nov. 16

2023 budget approved; mill levy match maintains revenue

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Monument Fire District (MFD) meeting on Nov. 16, the board held a public hearing for the proposed 2023 budget, amended the 2022 budget, and adopted the 2023 budget and multiple resolutions. The board also approved an expense reimbursement agreement and received multiple updates.

Secretary Mike Smaldino and Director Jason Buckingham were excused.

**Public hearing on 2022 amended budget**

The board opened the public hearing for the 2022 amended budget. Hearing no one speak in favor or opposition, the board closed the hearing, 5-0.

President John Hildebrandt requested the board approve Resolution 2022-10, a resolution summarizing expenditures and revenues for each fund and adopting an amended budget for the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (DBA Monument Fire District) beginning Jan. 1, 2022, and ending Dec. 31, 2022. The board approved the resolution in a roll call vote, 5-0.

**Note:** The budget was adjusted from about \$12.9 million to about \$14.7 million.

**Public hearing on 2023 proposed budget**

The board opened the public hearing, no one spoke in favor or opposition and the board closed the hearing, 5-0. See [www.ocn.me/v22n11.htm#mfd](http://www.ocn.me/v22n11.htm#mfd).

Fire Chief Andy Kovacs said the projected property tax

income for MFD is expected to be about \$10.9 million (\$10.8 million was projected for 2022). The final property tax assessment will not be known until early December. Kovacs noted some of the important features of the 2023 budget as:

- A temporary increase in the mill levy from 18.4 mills to 18.83 mills for 2023 to offset the loss of revenue resulting from the state Legislature lowering the Residential Assessment Rate.
- A cost-of-living allowance increase for employees.
- Hire six new firefighters and a fire technician.
- Fleet and equipment purchases.
- Identify property to build a new Station 3 to replace the existing station on Woodmoor Drive.
- Remodel Stations 2 (Roller Coaster Road), 4 (Gleneagle Drive), and 5 (Highway 83/Stage Coach Road).
- Continue to set aside funds for future capital purchases.

**Note:** The MFD anticipated revenue for 2023 of about \$16.5 million coupled with the DWFPD revenue (about \$3.1 million) for operating services will provide a total projected income of about \$19.6 million (includes Specific Ownership Taxes, ambulance revenue, impact fees, and other miscellaneous revenues).

In a roll call vote, the board approved the following:

- Resolution 2022-07, a res-

olution adopting the 2023 budget and approving each fund's expenditures and revenues.

- Resolution 2022-08, the 2023 budget appropriation of sums of money to various funds.
- Resolution 2022-09, the 2023 property tax levy for the year 2023 to help defray the cost of government for the Monument Fire District 2023 budget year. Increasing the mill levy to 18.83 mills for 2023 to offset the loss of revenue resulting from the temporary reduction of the Residential Assessment Rate.
- The 2023 wage schedule. Vice President Roger Lance recused himself during the wage schedule vote.

The board also approved the 2023 fee schedule and the 2023 Board of Directors meeting schedule, 5-0. See [www.tlmfire.org](http://www.tlmfire.org).

Kovacs informed the board of the DWFPD change in meeting schedule dates and times. See DWFPD article on page 13.

**Financial report**

Treasurer Tom Kelly said as of October the district revenue was about \$13.2 million and 102% of the projected 2022 income budget set at about \$12.9 million. Expenses were about \$8.7 million of the projected 2022 expense budget set at about \$10.1 million.

Hildebrandt said the district is receiving a significant amount of revenue from specific ownership taxes and ambulance fees, and revenue looks good for the remainder of the year and into 2023.

The board accepted the treasurer's report as presented, 5-0.

**Expense reimbursement agreement**

Kovacs requested the board approve the expense reimbursement agreement with the Town of Monument (TOM) for the water supply connection



**Above:** From left are Division Chief of Administration/Fire Marshal Jamey Bumgarner, Lt. Christopher Keough holding his Firefighter of the Year award, Division Chief of Operations Jonathan Bradley, and Fire Chief Andy Kovacs at the Monument Fire District Second Annual Awards Banquet on Nov. 8 at Hearth House in Monument. Keough received the Firefighter of the Year award for 2022, and currently serves the combined district as the officer in charge of fleet and facilities. *Photo courtesy of Monument Fire District.*

for \$127,743.00. See [www.ocn.me/v22n7.htm#tlmfpd](http://www.ocn.me/v22n7.htm#tlmfpd).

The board approved the agreement, 4-1. Director Tom Tharnish, the TOM Public Works director abstained.

**American Medical Response - update**

Kovacs said as the months go by in 2022 the district is receiving fewer calls for assistance from American Medical Response (AMR) and said:

- The district hosted a breakfast meeting with the other county transport agencies to formulate a unified approach to solve the problems. See [www.ocn.me/v22n11.htm#mfd](http://www.ocn.me/v22n11.htm#mfd).
- The meeting was productive and the result should rectify some of the challenges the agencies had with AMR.
- In October the district accepted 10 out of the 12 AMR requests, far better than the January accep-

tance rate of 64 requests.

- The Colorado Springs Fire Department (CSFD) operates three squads of ambulances available to AMR and before that resource is depleted, AMR is requesting outside transport agencies to avoid a \$3,000 penalty for not dispatching to calls.
- The meeting resulted in the creation of a shared penalty fee schedule depending on the type of call, and that will begin in December.

**Chief's report**

Kovacs said the following:

- At the beginning of October, he and Chief of Operations Jonathan Bradley and Battalion Chief Micah Coyle attended a three-day workshop designed to assist districts seeking accreditation at the Center for Public Safety Excellence Quality

MFD (Cont. on 16)



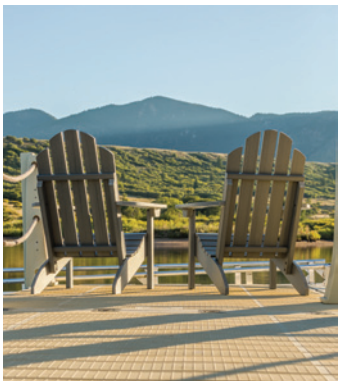
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MFD (Cont. from 14)

- Improvement for the Fire and Emergency Services in Fort Collins.
- Division Chief of Administration/Fire Marshal Jamey Bumgarner, Battalion Chief Scott Ridings, and Battalion Chief of Training Kris Mola had attended the same course in Fort Collins, and the goal is for the rest of the executive team to attend in 2023.
  - The executive staff attended the graduation ceremony for the recruits attending the Colorado Springs Fire Academy (CSFA). The recruits graduated with others from the CSFD and the Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District.
  - The district had identified eight new recruits and made seven job offers with one alternate. The alternate will be contacted with a job offer after one of the initial candidates declined an offer.

- The district is hoping to attract a local entry-level paramedic to attend a paramedic course in February. The job posting will close in early December.
- About 941 training hours were completed in October, and the district usually completes around 550 hours per month. Kudos to the staff for training on a regular basis.
- Firefighters Shawn Ballard, Robert Horne, and Hunter Ortuno began Paramedic Training School at Penrose St. Francis Hospital in October. They are doing well and will be off shift for several months.
- Bumgarner reached out to 625 students in the district during Fire Prevention Month in October.
- Stations 1 and 4 had received new signage that is backlit in red.

- The DWFPD Rosenbauer 2000 engine was sold to a fire department in Bowie, Ariz., for \$40,000.
- Local 4319 food drive**
- Director of Administration Jennifer Martin said an update from Local 4319 representative Engineer Adam Wakefield confirmed that the Local 4319 Fifth Annual Pumpkin Giveaway had collected about 800 pounds in food donations for the Tri-Lakes Cares food pantry. The meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday of the month. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 7 at 6:30 p.m. at MFD Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. For Zoom meeting instructions, agendas, minutes, and updates, visit [www.tlmfire.org](http://www.tlmfire.org) or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

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

Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District, Nov. 16

Proposed 2023 budget presented; FAMLI program rejected

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD) meeting on Nov. 16, the board held a public hearing on the proposed 2023 budget, declined the option to join the Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) program, discussed potential development in the north of the district, heard about an unapproved additional cost for the ladder truck, and received multiple updates to include a large unexpected repair to a deployed apparatus.

Vice Chairman James Abendschan was excused.

**2023 proposed budget public hearing**

Fire Chief PJ Langmaid said the general summary provided to the board was not correct due to a column cell not carrying over.

- Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn said:
- The budget had been adjusted to reflect the board direction to maintain an eight-person per day staffing model in 2023. See [www.ocn.me/v22n11.htm#bffrpd](http://www.ocn.me/v22n11.htm#bffrpd).
  - The wages reflect a 3% cost of living allowance increase for 2023.
  - The biggest change to the budget is the 2% reduction in the Firefighters and Police Pension Association (FPPA) compensation. That reduction allows extra funds to be allocated to training and elsewhere.

Chairman Nate Dowden said kudos to the district safety standards that had resulted in a decrease in the FPPA workers compensation in 2022.

- Langmaid said it is a shock that the workers compensation decreased, considering the amount of training the district completes, and added:
- The district had also managed to move the \$5,000 per volunteer pension recipient back into the fund due to the reduction in the FPPA compensation.
  - The estimated columns shown in the budget for the carry over into 2023 for the general operating funds is expected to change by December.
  - Revenue would be far less if the district did not deploy to wildland fire incidents throughout the year.

Dowden said the district will certify the tax levies and

adopt the 2023 proposed budget and the fee schedule at its December meeting.

**Note:** The projected property tax revenue for 2023 is expected to be about \$3.7 million, and the mill levy will be set at 14.951 mills. Prior to the public hearing, notice was posted at [www.bffire.org](http://www.bffire.org) and the proposed 2023 budget was available for public inspection at Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs.

**Family and Medical Leave Insurance program**

District attorney Linda Glesne of the Cockrel Ela Glesne Greher and Ruhland law firm explained the FAMLI program and said:

- If the district decides to participate in the new state program, as an employer it would contribute 0.45% of each participant's paid wages.
- The staff are required to match the district contribution.
- The benefit would not be available until the district and staff had paid in to the program for a year.
- The district would need to decide to opt out by the end of the year and notify the state, otherwise the district would stay in the program for three years before being able to opt out.
- Regardless of participation, the district will need to opt out again after eight years.
- Staff could voluntarily choose to participate without district resources and record their own data quarterly to the state.
- The program is intended for employers that are not offering benefits.
- An individual contributing into the program would keep the benefit when transferring to a future employer. Each individual always has the right to opt into the program but would maintain their own records with the state.
- The benefit is not reduced even if the employer is not participating.

Langmaid said the maximum monthly benefit available to participants in the FAMLI program is \$1,300 per month, irrespective of how much each individual contributes. The district already has a program for sick leave accrual, vacation accrual, and short-term dis-

ability leave. The FAMLI program provides 12 weeks and an additional four weeks for emergency leave. He recommended the board opt out of the program, as the district already offers an adequate program. If the board opts in to the FAMLI program, the existing program would need to be modified, he said.

Treasurer Jack Hinton said the burden on the administrative staff could be cumbersome.

Langmaid said the administrative staff is already overburdened and appointments are needed to speak with Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn.

The board declined district participation in the FAMLI program, 4-0.

**Note:** A copy of a letter from Langmaid to staff explaining the state program was included in the board packet. OCN received the board packet upon request after the meeting.

**Future development**

Resident Linda Smith asked how the district planned to provide fire services to the Flying Horse North (FHN) development after the El Paso Board of County Commissioners approved an increase in home sites on Nov. 15. See *BOCC article on page 1 and letter on page 22*.

- Langmaid said:
- Three conversations had taken place regarding the provision of fire service with the FHN developers.
  - Information had been disseminated within the district to the public stating the district needed to purchase a ladder truck, but that was not accurate.
  - The district purchased a ladder truck at the direction of the board for the current need in the community regardless of future development.
  - The regional target is to have 28 firefighters show up at a structure fire. The district has a target of hiring enough staff to provide 15 firefighters per day upon buildout of FHN.
  - Classic Homes executive staff have shared the anticipated projected revenue for FHN, and revenue would provide the staffing needs upon buildout.
  - The district has to address Station 2 that was only built for a small volunteer staff, and it is a sub-standard station even for the current needs.
  - Potentially, FHN at buildout means a large population residing in the north end of the district. A larger station will be needed to accommodate the extra staff and to house the ladder truck. The increased service needs will happen regardless of FHN.
  - Preliminary estimates show a new station would cost about \$6 million to \$8 million, and engineers estimate a remodel of Station 2 to current NFPA standards would cost \$4 million to \$6 million.
  - Now that the FHN developers know there is the potential for a project, the big hurdle will be the sufficiency of water for the development.
  - The FHN developers are committed to working with the fire district to resolve the issues of providing fire services.

**Financial report**

Hinton said the district had about \$2.8 million in the General Operating Fund, including about \$236,107 in the Emergency Reserve Fund, \$193,276 in the Capital Improvement Fund, and \$137,026 for the TABOR Fund for a combined total of about \$566,409. The district received about \$131,000 in combined revenue in



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October, he said.

Hinton asked if the large apparatus repair bill the district received could have been taken care of by district mechanic Gavin Smith.

Langmaid said it was not an option, because the vehicle was in Oklahoma on a wildland deployment. The \$5,000 bill involved an overhead lift to remove the cab from the Rosenbauer engine to gain access to the chassis before any repairs could be made.

Hinton said the district is over budget due to the unexpected expense for the apparatus recovery during the deployment.

The board accepted the financials as presented, 4-0.

Ladder truck update

Deputy Chief of Operations Chris Piepenburg said the district had received video updates on the 2005 used ladder truck and it looks like a brand-new truck with the installation of new lights and paint. Brindlee Mountain Fire Apparatus of Alabama is fixing the water way at no cost to the district, and delivery is anticipated early to mid-January.

Langmaid said he had gone beyond board authorization to update the light package inside the Pierce tower ladder apparatus for \$3,498. Brindlee Mountain Fire Apparatus had forgotten to include the internal lights in the initial quote, but the apparatus supplier is spending \$9,000 to \$10,000 to replace the leaking water way.

Dowden said he agreed with the decision.

**Chief's report**

Langmaid said the following:

- He is constantly looking at the strategic landscape to ensure the district is a tremendous benefit to the whole region and maintains good relationships.
- Discussions regarding the communications system within the county are taking place to mitigate some of the existing bureaucracy and bridge communications with Colorado Springs.
- A staff meeting was scheduled in November to discuss capital needs and strategic plan for a future Station 3 in the Sterling Ranch area and the needs for a future Station 2.
- The district spends 19% to 21% of the time training, completing 1,492 hours in October, and the board can expect to see a request for an established district standard in early 2023.

**Operations and training report**

Piepenburg said:

- The district assisted Hannover Fire District with a 400-acre wildland fire behind Pikes Peak International Raceway. Immediately after helping, that team was redirected to Pueblo County to assist a rancher with a bulldozer that had spon-

- taneously combusted in a pasture.
- Three staff members attended a Structural Collapse Technician Course at Alabama Fire College in Tuscaloosa. The course qualifies staff to assist on Colorado Urban Task Force 1, a Federal Emergency Management Agency team.
  - The state is not abundant with fire certification courses, and the Alabama Fire College provides a "one-stop shop" for quality training programs, and the district will continue sending staff.
  - Four district firefighters graduated from the Colorado Springs Fire Academy. The district was held in high regard from the instructor cadre, blending in seamlessly, and firefighter Trevor Holiday was the top recruit of the academy. It was a good result in a class of 20 to 30.
  - The district is hosting live fire training for the Colorado Springs Fire Academy in a mutual swap site for training services.

Staff retention

Langmaid responded to Smith's question about staff retention, saying the district will always have competition with other fire districts and BFFRPD will lose someone in February to South Metro Fire District, Denver. Monument Fire District is adopting a massive pay increase for staff in 2023, and CSFD is implementing an increase higher than BFFRPD. BFFRPD is hiring high-caliber personnel and competes with its culture, but it will not always win out when firefighters have mouths for feed and bills to pay, and the cost of living continues to increase. At some point, a mill levy increase will be needed to maintain the 2018 decision to create a full-time professional fire service. Staff departures have slowed, but there will be a threat as long as competition exists. The staff were grossly underpaid when the district lost firefighters after two months employment. The pay at that time was comparative to the pay Hinton paid his carpenters in the 1980s, he said.

District receives donation

Board Secretary Donna Arkowski said the family of Walter and Imelda Evans, a married couple who joined the department in 1976 as volunteers, had both passed away several years ago, and the 13 children taking care of the estate had donated \$3,000 to the district in the couple's name.

Langmaid recommended the donation be split between both stations to enhance the quality of life for the firefighters.

The meeting adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

**Note:** Our Community News requested photos and names of the firefighters who took the oath of office at the beginning of the meeting, and has not yet received them. OCN attended via Zoom technology.

\*\*\*\*\*

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, Dec. 7 at 7 p.m. For joining instructions, updates, agendas, minutes, and reports, visit [www.bffire.org](http://www.bffire.org) or contact Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn at [admin@bffire.org](mailto:admin@bffire.org) or call 719-495-4300.

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

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Monument Academy School Board, Nov. 10 and 18

# Board adds to uniform policy, moves forward on COO hiring

By Jackie Burhans

The Monument Academy (MA) School Board held its regular meeting on Nov. 10 to discuss additions to its uniform and dress code policies, address carline issues, and hear board highlights. The board also held a special meeting on Nov. 18 to go into executive session to discuss the next steps toward hiring a chief operating officer (COO).

Additions to the uniform policy and dress code

At the Nov. 10 regular meeting, the board discussed proposed changes to the middle school uniform policy and high school dress code as requested by the East Campus Parent Teachers Organization. Items to be added included a fleece crew jacket, a track jacket, and a fleece varsity jacket similar to a letterman jacket, which would add lower-cost options that would be in stock.

Board member Joe Buczkowski asked if the varsity fleece jacket had a hood, reminding the board of the previous meetings with lengthy discussions of behavioral issues caused by hoods. He said hoodies had been removed from the uniform option due to these issues. The motion to approve the three options was withdrawn, and a new motion was made to approve the fleece crew and track jacket only so that those policies could be updated and brought forward for approval next month so that the jackets could be available sooner. The board approved the new motion unanimously and postponed the discussion of the fleece varsity jacket with a hood to a later time.

Carline issues

The board went into a two-hour executive session "for discussion regarding the purchase, acquisition, or lease of real property; to discuss matters required to be kept confidential by law regarding personal files and application materials for COO position, and regarding the MLO ballot measure; for specialized details of security arrangements and to discuss carline safety issues; and determining positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations regarding real property and contracted services."

On its return to open session, board member Emily Belisle thanked those whose disciplined adherence to MA's carline procedures make nearly 600 West Campus and 500 East Campus drop-offs and pick-ups a success. However, she said, it has come to MA's attention that a few drivers are committing traffic violations, not following procedures, and losing their tempers with staff and other drivers. It's unsafe for staff and students, and disrespectful behavior toward hard-working staff and other drivers is unacceptable. She said that making a left turn onto Highway 105 is strictly prohibited at all times, and traffic flow is only one way. For the safety of children and staff, MA will have no other recourse than to notate cars that violate carline rules and ticket or revoke carline access.

She noted that being late is not an excuse and asked parents to please budget enough time for carline into their daily routine. She asked parents for their cooperation, saying it was important to model best behavior in front of kids.

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Hiring consultant approved

At its Nov. 18 special meeting, the board went directly into executive session to “discuss negotiations and advice to negotiators regarding fundraising matters and to review proposals and negotiations regarding possible contracted services.”

After around three hours of discussion, the board unanimously approved authorizing the hiring sub-committee composed of board President Ryan Graham and Vice President Lindsay Clinton to negotiate and execute a contract for hiring the chief executive consultant.

Highlights

- Board meeting highlights include:
- Board member Craig Carle recognized Scott and Rachel Karstens for devoting their time to ensuring the success of the MA football program. Scott stepped up to coach, emphasizing the key fundamentals of football, good sportsmanship, and hard work, said Carle. Rachel put in hours on the sideline, provided rides to players, and put on a banquet where each kid was spotlighted. The last two years have been successful, with back-to-back winning seasons and the thrill of bringing home the championship this year.
  - Chief Financial Officer and Interim Chief Operation Officer Marc Brocklehurst reported that the appraisal of a portion of MA’s West Campus property had been completed, and he expects results shortly. The recirculation project has been posted on BidNet, a nationwide site for



**Above:** The November board spotlight recognized Scott and Rachel Karstens for their support of the successful Monument Academy football program. From left, board member Craig Carle, Scott Karstens, and Rachel Karstens. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

- government contract opportunities, and two prospective bidders have made inquiries.
- Belisle reported that the curriculum committee had begun discussions of a portrait of a graduate and had a robust discussion of the school’s math curriculum. She agreed to ask the curriculum committee to bring a proposal for parental review back to the board’s governance committee.
  - Belisle and board member Michael Geers noted that the East and West Campus school accountability advisory committees (SAAC) were preparing for their upcoming parent survey. Geers said the West Campus SAAC was looking

- to propose an alternative to the Capturing Kids Hearts program to save money and more closely align with MA’s philosophy. High School Principal David Kennington said MA’s East Campus would be the site of the upcoming meeting of the District Accountability Advisory Committee, which was being rebranded as the Parent and Community Advisory Committee.
- Buczkowski reported for the Finance Committee that there would be unanticipated expenses for hooking up the modulators, as one would be used as a high school science classroom and for HVAC systems service on both campuses. The modular cost is unknown, but he estimated the HVAC costs to be \$16,000 for West Campus and \$12,000 for East Campus and expected to see final budget revisions voted on in December.
  - The board unanimously approved a memorandum of understanding with Leading Edge to provide before and aftercare. If Leading Edge accepts the agreement and MA receives its licensing, the program could begin in early spring or might be delayed until the start of the next school year.

\*\*\*\*\*

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, Dec. 10, at 6 p.m. on the East Campus. *See more information at see <https://bit.ly/ma-boe>.*

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

Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education, Nov. 14

Board acts on bus purchases, opts out of FAMLI, ponders ways to cope with failure of the mill levy override ballot measure



**Above:** At the Nov. 14 D38 Board of Education meeting, members of the American Legion Tri-Lakes Post 9-11 presented the colors and led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Presenting the colors is a practice conducted by color guards who move the colors (in this case, the American flag and the Colorado state flag) from a carried position and place them in a stand. The American Legion color guard then presents arms ahead of the Pledge. From left are Anthony Trifiletti, John Hartling, James Bergeron, and Randy Fritz. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

*By Harriet Halbig*

The Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education devoted much of its Nov. 14 meeting to examining funding alternatives following the defeat of the mill levy override on the November ballot.

**Bus purchase discussion**

Board President Chris Taylor moved that the district should purchase four new buses, with two funded by the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) fund and two from the transportation fund.

Executive Director of Operations and Development Chris Coulter and Chief Business Officer Brett



**Above:** At the Nov. 14 regular board meeting, the Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education thanked and honored all who have served in the U.S. military in both wartime and peacetime. The board asked attending D38 staff members, including those from Monument Academy, who have or are serving in any branch of the military, to come forward for special recognition. Phillips read the certificate of appreciation, which said, “In recognition and appreciation for your voluntary service, commitment, and sacrifices to our country and now to our nation’s youth via your service to D38.” Shown are, from left, Theresa Phillips, D38 board member; Stephanie Markle, Social Studies; Chris Coulter, Maintenance and Operations; Mike Leland, Transportation; Todd Ronk, Safety and Security; David Shindel, Transportation; Jim Taylor, Student Services; Mike Theemling, Computer Science and Technology; Paul Willie; Lindsay Clinton, MA board member, David Kennington, MA High School principal; Ron Schwarz, D38 board member; Ryan Graham, MA board president. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

Ridgway explained that the district’s school buses travel 50% more miles than the national average each year, and the lifespan of a bus should be 15 years. Over half of the district fleet is older than 15 years and as a result there is \$10,000 to \$15,000 in maintenance expenses each year.

New buses would have more safety features and better gas mileage. Coulter said the goal would be to replace two buses per year until all are less than 15 years old. ESSER funds can be used because new buses are a safety issue. Many buses in the district fleet have over 200,000 miles on them.

Coulter said that if the buses are ordered now, they could be delivered by August 2023, and many other districts are now ordering buses.

Board Treasurer Ron Schwarz praised Coulter for his research and said that each bus will cost around \$135,000. He questioned whether purchase of the buses was more of a priority than other safety features such as completing the installation of 3M film on school windows.

Superintendent KC Somers said that it is difficult to list the top priorities for spending in the district, but buses are absolutely needed.

Board Vice President Theresa Phillips commented that the purchase of two buses was cancelled a few years ago.

Taylor’s motion to purchase four buses failed by a vote of 3 to 2.

Director Matthew Clawson moved that the district purchase two buses using ESSER funds. The motion passed.

The board agreed to discuss this issue further at its next work session on Nov. 29.

**Board opts out of FAMLI**

Human Resources Director Misty Manchester explained that the state is offering paid Family Leave and Medical Insurance to staff. District staff was surveyed about whether they wished to participate as a district at the cost of 0.9% per pay period, with individuals paying 0.45%.

The staff voted to opt out of the program with the understanding that individuals could participate through the Colorado Department of Education.

The board voted to opt out of the program as a district.

**Post-election budget discussion**

Ridgway presented a financial planning and analysis PowerPoint explaining that the district has spent 1% less than anticipated year to date but there is also a shortfall in revenue.

Following a lengthy discussion, Taylor asked for a detailed report on the aging bus fleet and the physical condition of other assets such as buildings in the district. He also asked for an analysis of staff turnover.

At a previous meeting, Ridgway reported that there was a total of \$800,000 in the transportation fund, which was not earmarked for any particular purpose. Part of this could be used to purchase buses, as explained above.

Taylor said there were a number of unfilled staff positions and asked whether these district savings



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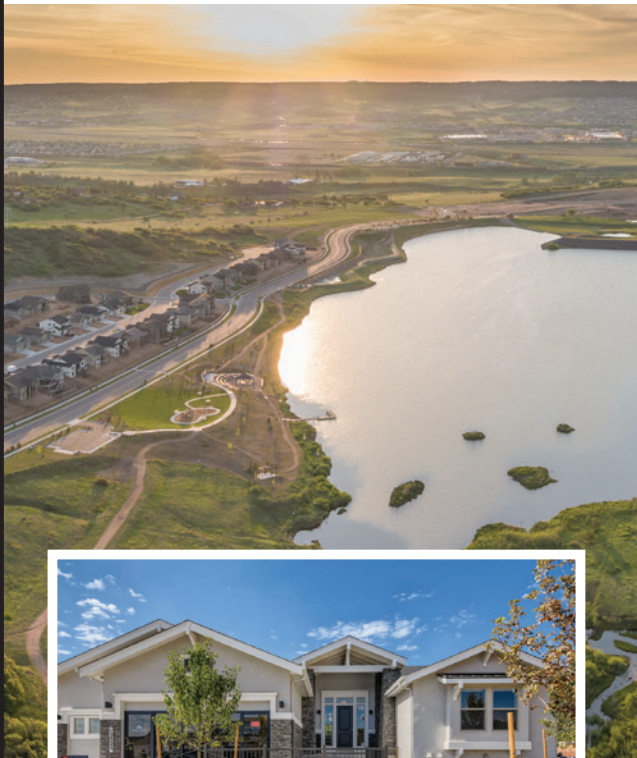
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D38 (Cont. from 18)

could be used together with other savings to give a one-time compensation to staff.

Somers said that such an action was well received a few years ago, but that was prompted by a hiring freeze and reaction to the pandemic, not raising compensation on a permanent basis.

Phillips said that the priority now must be in finding sustainable sources of funding.

Regarding other potential sources of funds for such an action, Ridgway said that there are also funds in nutrition services and from fundraising.

Ridgway said it might be unwise to commit to a one-time action in advance of learning the level of state funding for the 2023-24 school year, which would not be known until March. Gov. Jared Polis has said that he will increase funding by 8% to 10% but was not specific. This increase would be realized as a change in per pupil funding and would be put in the general fund.

Taylor also asked for an analysis of district turnover among the staff. Phillips asked that this analysis include substitute teachers.

In their board member comments, several direc-

tors expressed an opinion on the budget situation.

Board Secretary Tiffiney Upchurch said she visited all district buildings on the day after the election and said that, regardless of which side of the vote you are on, we must remember that we are all neighbors and should treat each other with respect. She urged the public to familiarize themselves with the budget process.

Phillips said that she appreciated all who have reached out since the election, and that we need long-term solutions to the problem.

Clawson said that the public has spoken and that we need to reduce expenditures.

All members of the board thanked veterans on the staff for their personal sacrifice.

**Public comment**

A number of members of the public spoke during the meeting.

Two said they were grateful that the board voted to not change its policy on public comment, which would have required individuals to submit their comment in advance online.

Several thanked the board for putting the MLO on the ballot and encouraged them to keep trying until they are successful.

One criticized Somers for his post-election video, saying that he shamed voters who voted against the MLO. He said that the district should live within its means.

One suggested that the public be assisted in understanding the budget situation by being offered alternatives such as making sports self-funded. Perhaps a detailed proposal would help to clarify the situation.

One said there was not a mobilization of parent groups in support of the MLO. She suggested that Kiwanis, homeowners associations and the Chamber of Commerce should be included in seeking support. Perhaps the mayors of Monument and Palmer Lake could be enlisted to speak in favor of the cause. Perhaps adding a sunset clause which would limit the term of the MLO would help.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Lewis-Palmer D38 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. in Monument. The December meeting will be on Dec. 12 as schools will be closed during Christmas week.

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

D38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee, Nov. 15

## Committee discusses options following election

*By Harriet Halbig*

On Nov. 15, the D38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee (formerly the District Accountability Advisory Committee) discussed strategies to cope with the failure of a mill levy override (MLO) on the November ballot.

In her Board of Education update, Board Liaison Tiffiney Upchurch reported that the MLO failed by only 360 votes. She said the emphasis going forward is to seek sustainable sources of funding to improve salaries for teachers and other non-administrative staff of the district.

Upchurch reported that Gov. Jared Polis has indicated that he may increase the education budget by 8 percent to 10 percent in the school year 2023-24. This would be seen as an increase of per-pupil funding. She cautioned that this would not necessarily result in a compensation increase of that amount because the funding will be put in the general fund.

Superintendent KC Somers answered a number of questions from the membership.

When asked about whether universal free lunches were coming to the district, he said that would not happen until the 2023-24 school year and guidelines have not yet been released. Students who currently qualify for free or reduced lunch will still need to apply, because that program is supported by the federal government.

Asked if grants could ease the funding crunch, Somers said that the district now applies for many grants successfully, but those funds must be used for specific purposes.

Asked if community members could donate directly for increased compensation, Somers said there is no mechanism for that, but there is a program to adopt a classroom or a school to support programming.

Asked about potential school closings or a four-day week, Somers said districts in other parts of the state are closing schools due to falling enrollment figures. That is not the case in District 38. He said that four-day weeks are a subject which will be examined to see how much it would save. He said it is unlikely it would go into effect as soon as next year.

Upchurch said it is critical that the public under-

stand the current sources of funding. For example, many think that money from the sale of marijuana is earmarked for schools, but it is not applied to compensation.

She said she will continue to work with the Colorado Association of School Boards to lobby for increased school funding. She also suggested staging some sort of education appreciation event in the district.

Somers said that last spring, the district updated separation forms completed by those leaving the district. A committee member suggested that if such forms were made public, perhaps the public would see the severity of the situation.

Regarding demographics, Somers said the predicted tsunami of growth has not materialized, although there are plans to build many houses in the near future. This year's enrollment is slightly down from last year.

**Strategic Plan Priority 3: valuing our people**

Chief Business Officer Brett Ridgway reported on actions in support of Priority 3 of the district's Strategic Plan.

Pointing to a chart illustrating the state's budget, he said that since 2008 education has received less funding and healthcare more as a result of Obamacare placing more of the burden on states.

One of the strategies the district is using to address the funding shortage is to create a Staff Collaboration Committee which will meet frequently to determine how staff feels about the current situation and what could be improved with the funding available.

The committee consists of two teachers from each school (one new and one experienced) and representatives of hourly staff such as operations, food service, and transportation.

The committee has no authority but acts as a source of information from a variety of viewpoints. The group will meet three to five times a year.

Following the first meeting, when asked what was on their minds, members responded:

- Could alternative forms of compensation be discovered (such as additional planning time)?
- Support staff should be offered additional train-

ing.

- Consider a four-day work week.
- Substitute pay and shortages are problems.

Ridgway said we will probably not know until March what the increase in funding will be.

Somers commented that we will not be able to achieve the \$5.6 million which the MLO would have provided, but we will strive to do the best we can with what we have.

Asked what happens if there are too few teachers, Somers said that sometimes classes are combined, teachers are given an additional class each day, more online instruction is offered, or less qualified substitutes are used.

**Monument Academy introduction**

Monument Academy Principal David Kennington explained the philosophy behind Monument Academy's classical approach to education. He said the emphasis is to focus on Western civilization and educate students to become active and responsible citizens.

The curriculum is divided into three levels. The first, the elementary level, involves facts, data, and basic skills such as spelling, reading, and math. The second level involves understanding how the facts fit together and why, and the third level involves proper use of the knowledge and understanding.

Kennington also said that students at the high school level may participate in dual enrollment with the high school and college.

When asked whether teachers are given specific instruction on how to teach, Kennington said teachers are told what should be taught but not how to teach it.

To view the PowerPoint, please go to lewispalmer.org, family resources, district accountability advisory committee, meeting content and November 2022.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Parent and Community Advisory Committee meets five times a year. Locations vary. The next meeting will be from 6 to 8 p.m. on Jan. 10 at Ray Kilmer Elementary School, 4285 Walker Road, Colorado Springs. For further information, contact tmckee@lewispalmer.org.

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

Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations, Nov. 12

## Two county commissioners speak on budgeting, spending

*By Marlene Brown*

NEPCO (Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations) held its bi-monthly meeting on Nov. 12 at the Woodmoor Barn. It has 47 homeowner associations in its membership. With 24 homeowner associations (HOAs) in attendance at their annual membership meeting, making a quorum, they were able to hold elections.

The one new nomination received for board membership was Harold Larson of Heights Property Owners Association. Currently installed officers include Mike Aspenson, president; Bob Swedenburg, vice president and acting secretary; Transportation and Land Use Committee member Bob Mooney; El

Paso County Transportation Planning member Greg Roosevelt; Treasurer Jim Keefe; Community Outreach Committee, Dave Betzler; Membership, Larry Oliver; and Beth Lonnquist replacing Matthew Nelson, Wildfire Preparedness Committee. Board member positions will be decided upon at the next NEPCO Board meeting Dec. 9 at the Woodmoor Barn 9 a.m. The meeting is open to any HOA member that is a member of NEPCO.

**Wildfire Preparedness Committee**

Beth Lonquist of Red Rock Ranch explained several new state wildfire actions that have been approved this year:

- HB22-1111—Concerning insurance coverage requirements for homeowners' policies issued or renewed as a result of declared fire disaster and in the event of total loss.
- HB22-1132—Regulation and Services for Wildfire Mitigation in connection with controlled burns on private property.
- SB114—Concerning preserving fire suppressions ponds in connection with making appropriations. It is in the public interest to preserve and protect historic ponds in new developments and restricting the mandatory draining of the ponds.



For more information regarding these and other current legislation, go to <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills> and <https://trackbill.com/bill/colorado-senate-bill-114>. Lonquist also talked about a proposed bill for the 2023 Legislature that would require wildfire evacuation planning for new developments.

Land Use and Transportation Committee

Bob Mooney explained the proposed Caliber Project, 16 acres adjacent to Palmer Ridge High School that would consist of 264 units housed in 20 buildings. A current concern is the traffic impact at the high school and the elementary and middle school, considering that the project could bring another 400 vehicles to Monument Hill Road and Woodmoor Drive. Woodmoor Improvement Association has sent a letter to the county commissioners listing specific concerns.

The proposed Monument Ridge Annexation (east and west sides of I-25 and County Line Road) is composed of 422 residences including single-fam-

ily homes and townhomes. The east side would be served by the Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District and the west side would be served by the Town of Monument water. The Town of Monument has postponed possible annexation until January.

County commissioners

Holly Williams, county commissioner for District 1, and Stan VanderWerf, District 3, spoke about budgeting and spending for the county. El Paso is a large county in land mass. It is the size of Delaware.

Some of the recent expenditures in the county budget controlled by the Board of County Commissioners include:

- Water infrastructure Received
- Monument Sanitation District \$684,000
- Palmer Lake Sanitation District \$1 million
- Triview Metropolitan District \$1 million
- The Loop Regional Water \$4 million
- Donala Wastewater \$1.65 million

Northern El Paso County road infrastructure projects completed are: County Line Road, Jessie Drive, Furrow Road, Baptist Road, Black Forest Road, Winchester Road, Shoup Road, Gleneagle Drive, Milam Road, Walker Road, Murphy Road, Silver Nell Road, Lake Woodmoor Drive, Fairplay Drive, Steppler Road, Deer Creek Road, Bend in the Trail, and Lost Arrowhead Drive.

There is a backlog of paved road maintenance requirements that continuously strains the budget.

\*\*\*\*\*

The next meeting will be on Jan. 10 at 10 a.m. at The Woodmoor Barn. Scheduled guest speaker will be the Pikes Peak Area County Governments transportation director. For more information regarding NEPCO, go to <http://nepco.org>

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

Woodmoor Improvement Association, Nov. 16

Board passes budget, increases annual dues

By Jackie Burhans

The Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) board met on Nov. 16 to pass the budget, report on the Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Organizations (NEPCO) meeting, and hear board reports.

Budget passes

In the “New Business” portion of the meeting, the board unanimously passed the 2023 budget, with Treasurer Connie Brown noting that the annual dues would increase \$8 from \$275 to \$283. This represents a 2.9% increase, which is just under the maximum 3% allowed in the Woodmoor Covenants. Annual dues are used to pay for Woodmoor Public Safety, The Barn, Open Space maintenance, and more. President Brian Bush said the balanced budget would be posted on the website ([woodmoor.org/budget-statements/](http://woodmoor.org/budget-statements/)) and noted that inflation had made it difficult for the board to do what they need to do with staffing, public safety, and maintaining existing and new common areas.

NEPCO presentation

WIA Secretary and Community Outreach Director Rick DePaiva thanked Bush, Vice President Peter Bille, and Public Safety Director Brad Gleason for attending the Nov. 12 NEPCO meeting at The Barn in his absence. Bush noted that NEPCO is a group of 47 homeowners’ associations (HOAs) in Northern El Paso

County, including WIA. The recent meeting included a presentation on ongoing development efforts, including the Caliber Apartments near Palmer Ridge High School and the Monument Ridge Annexation efforts on County Line Road, as well as a presentation by El Paso County Commissioners Holly Williams and Stan VanderWerf.

The presentations, which also include information about NEPCO and reports from its wildfire, transportation, and land use preparedness committees, are available at [www.nepco.org](http://www.nepco.org) under Member Areas. The user ID and password can be obtained from WIA or any of the member HOAs.

Board highlights

- Bille said WIA is still looking for IT support services.
- Covenants Director Cindy Thrush reported there were 140 items in October, 15 of which resulted in violations. None of the items was unfounded, and 125 of them were resolved with friendly communications. There were 15 HOA checks, which occur upon the sale of a property. There were no covenant hearings in October or November, however one hearing is scheduled for December with four items on the agenda.
- Gleason reported that Lewis-Palmer D38 grant writer Cathy Fish-Wilcox had applied for another Safe Routes to School (SRTS) grant which,

if approved, would provide a pedestrian bridge over the spillway at the south end of Woodmoor Lake.

- Bob Pearsall, architectural control committee and common areas administrator, reported that there were 74 project applications submitted in October, over half of which involved replatting properties in South Woodmoor as part of the effort to preserve open space. He also noted that 566 projects were submitted in 2022 so far, which was 13.5% behind the previous year; 555 of those have been approved for a 98.1% approval rate.
- Forestry Director Ed Miller said \$44,000 had been reimbursed to residents from the fire mitigation grant, with the final reimbursements to be received in six to eight weeks. He thanked forestry volunteers for their hundreds of hours of work.

\*\*\*\*\*

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 Dec. 14 due to the Christmas holiday.

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

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

November Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

Temperatures were well below normal for the month, but the cold air also meant the air was generally dry. In fact, several locations in the Western U.S. set records for the coldest November monthly average temperature on record. This includes our region, where all stations from Fort Collins to Pueblo were in their top 10 coldest Novembers on record. The generally cold air mass also resulted in less moisture than normal for us with both precipitation and snow slightly below normal for the month along the Palmer Divide.

The good news with this cool pattern was that most of the Western half of the U.S. was affected by an active storm track. This meant most of the mountains in the West, including Colorado, received above-normal snowfall and helped build a good early-season snowpack.

Several storm systems moved through the region during the month. Unfortunately, most of these originated in the Pacific Northwest. This pattern produces glancing blows for us on the Front Range as each of the storms turns the corner into the Midwest right around Colorado. When this happens, the area of low pressure that develops on the lee side of the Rockies forms a little too far north and east of us to produce significant upslope flow or to allow significant moisture to move into the region froth the southeast. As the storm moves out of the region, cold air is able to move in, producing chilly temperatures and just enough moisture for brief periods of light snow. This was the case for most of the storms that moved through during the month as we received several pushes of cold air with light snowfalls.

The month started with mild and breezy conditions, with high temperatures reaching the mid-60s on the 1st and 2nd. These mild conditions were interrupted by a quick-moving cold front during the morn-

ing of the 3rd. Low clouds built in behind this front, with snow showers off and on during the early afternoon. Temperatures remained below normal that day and the next with highs holding in the low 40s. Conditions remained dry from the 4th through the 9th, but a cool northwesterly flow kept temperatures slightly below average through the 7th.

Gusty westerly winds kicked up on the 8th and especially the 9th ahead of a stronger storm that was headed our way. Temperatures warmed again into the mid-60s both afternoons, with areas of blowing dust from the San Luis Valley on the afternoon of the 9th. This next storm pushed cold air through during the early evening hours of the 10th, with some light snow developing that evening. Temperatures remained cold through the next afternoon, with light snow and fog. Highs only reached the upper 20s on the 11th.

As this initial storm moved out, we had a brief quiet period from the 12th through the afternoon of the 13th before the next push of cold air moved in. This cold front moved in during the early afternoon of the 13th, with clouds filling in through the evening. A few flurries occurred that evening with light snow and flurries off and on over the next two days. Temperatures remained cold during the period too, with highs staying below freezing on the 14th and 15th. Unfortunately, like the previous few days, we only managed to squeeze out around an inch of snowfall. The 16th remained dry and cold before the final push of the cold air moved in the next morning.

As cold air continued to deepen, the atmosphere became saturated, with light snow developing that morning. Light snow continued off and on through the next afternoon, with 2-4 inches accumulating during the period. But the bigger story with this event was the cold air. High temperatures during the afternoon of the 17th were in the low 20s. The next af-

ternoon barely managed to reach the low teens and, with clearing skies that evening, temperatures quickly dipped below zero. The “high” temperatures on the 18th were cold enough to set a daily record low high for the date.

A period of quiet weather took hold for the next week with temperatures remaining below normal from the 19th through the 21st, then moving to slightly warmer than normal on the 22nd and 23rd as highs managed to touch the low 50s.

The final week of the month saw three quick-moving storm systems move through the region. Each of these brought a quick shot of light snow and cool weather, interspersed with mild and quiet conditions. The first of these moved through during the evening of the of the 23rd, with light snow and blowing snow occurring through the next morning. Only about a half inch accumulated, but it was blown around by strong winds which made the 24th feel even colder.

The next one brought another quick shot of snow during the early morning of the 27th, but again less than a half inch accumulated and the sunshine that afternoon melted most of that quickly. After a day of windy and clear skies on the 28th, the final system moved through on the 29th. This was the strongest of the systems during the last week of the month and brought a few inches of snow and cold temperatures for the last two days of November.

A look ahead

December can be cold around the region with daytime highs often staying below freezing and overnight lows that can drop well below zero. But, as noted previously, we can experience a wide variety of weather, with westerly winds producing mild conditions. The month is generally dry, however, with several light, fluffy snowfalls. Gusty winds are also a common nuisance during the month, especially west of I-25. The



chance of a white Christmas is fairly common, with most areas having some snow on the ground and if we are lucky, snowfall on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.	100-year return frequency value max <b>27.5°</b> min <b>14.1°</b> Monthly Precipitation <b>0.26"</b> (-0.43") 100-year return frequency value max <b>3.80"</b> min <b>0.16"</b> Monthly Snowfall <b>7.0"</b> (-3.8") Highest Temperature <b>66° on the 2nd</b> Lowest Temperature <b>-2° on the 18th</b> Season to Date Snow <b>13.2"</b> (-8.6") <i>(the snow season is from Oct 1 to Sept 30)</i>	Season to Date Precip. <b>14.17"</b> (-9.01") <i>(the precipitation season, Jan 1 to Dec 31)</i> Heating Degree Days <b>1103</b> (+235) Cooling Degree Days <b>0</b> (0) <i>Bill Kappel is a meteorologist and Tri-Lakes resident. He can be reached at billkappel@ocn.me.</i>
<b>November 2022 Weather Statistics</b>		
Average High	<b>43.3°</b> (-5.1°)	
100-year return frequency value max	<b>55.5°</b> min <b>38.5°</b>	
Average Low	<b>16.5°</b> (-4.9°)	

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.*

**County Commissioners: Who do they work for, the people or developers?**  
On Nov. 15, the El Paso County Commissioners approved a sketch plan for Flying Horse North that permitted Classic Homes to build 846 homes and a 275-unit luxury hotel on a parcel of ground that had previously been approved for 201 homes and no hotel. The project is in Black Forest where the lots are

large and the rural feel of trees and wildlife are the norm. Commissioners Vanderwerf, Bremer, and Geitner voted in favor with Commissioner Williams recusing herself for some unknown reason. Commissioner Gonzalez voted against the proposal.  
Why didn't the commissioners follow the Your El Paso County Master Plan that they approved in April 2021. That plan was supposed to guide development for El Paso County for the next 20 years and supposedly contains guidance: lot densities of at least 2.5 acres, small scale commercial development, compatibility with surrounding lots.  
This was the first real test of the master plan and it failed miserably. The county spent hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars and invested thousands of

hours of staff and committee time to come up with this colorful stack of worthless paper. If we are going to create a master plan, why don't we follow it? Instead, Commissioners Geitner and Bremer stated their belief in private property rights and the right of an individual to do what he wishes with his property. If we followed that principle, we wouldn't need a master plan at all. Just let everyone do what they want with their property.  
I sent out the objections that were submitted to the county to the members of the Friends of Black Forest. I received 693 responses, but the commissioners were not impressed. What does it take to get their attention?  
**Terry Stokka**

Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

More fall releases for the holidays

*By the staff at Covered Treasures*  
*"I love walking into a bookstore. It's like all my friends are sitting on shelves, waving their pages at me."*  
—Tahereh Mafi  
The holidays are bursting at the seams with new releases for all ages that make great gifts.

**How Winston Came Home for Christmas**  
*By Alex T. Smith (Silver Dolphin Books) \$17.99*  
With five days until Christmas, Winston sets off on an adventure. Along the way, he meets new friends who help him get closer to solving the mystery. A follow-up to *How Winston Delivered Christmas*, this illustrated book is to be read during the countdown to Christmas. Each chapter is accompanied by a festive activity, including decorations, crafts, and so much more.



**Wildoak**  
*By C.C. Harrington (Scholastic) \$18.99*  
Maggie Stephens' stutter makes school especially hard. So when her unsympathetic father threatens to send her away for "treatment," she reluctantly agrees to her mother's intervention plan: a few weeks in the fresh air of Wildoak Forest with her grandfather. There she encounters an abandoned snow leopard cub. But once the cub's presence is discovered, danger follows, and Maggie soon realizes that time is running out, not only for the leopard, but for herself and the forest as well.

**The Vanquishers**  
*By Kalynn Bayron (Bloomsbury) \$16.99*  
Malika "Boog" Wilson and her friends have grown up idolizing The Vanquishers, a group of heroic vampire hunters who wiped out the last horde of the undead decades ago. When a friend goes missing, Boog is determined to save her friend, but is she ready to admit vampires might not be vanquished after all?  
**Front Country**  
*By Sara St. Antoine (Chronicle) \$17.99*  
Ginny Shepard is glad to be in Montana for a month of backcountry camping before starting high school. But things get complicated fast, and Ginny feels trapped and betrayed. As her friendships with her fellow campers deepen, Ginny starts to see new sides of them and herself. This adventure captures the heartbreak of realizing the world isn't okay and shows how that knowledge, and what we choose to do with it, shapes us into who we are.  
**Abuela Don't Forget Me**  
*By Rex Ogle (Norton) \$18.95*  
In his award-winning memoir *Free Lunch*, Rex Ogle's Abuela features as a source of love and support. In this companion-in-verse, Rex captures and celebrates the powerful presence of a woman he could always count on. This is a lyrical portrait of the transformative and towering woman who believed in Rex even when he didn't yet know how to believe in himself.  
**The Alpha Female Wolf: The Fierce Legacy of Yellowstone's 06**  
*By Rick McIntyre (Greystone) \$27.95*  
Yellowstone's 06 female was called "the most famous wolf in the world." Her strength, beauty, and intelligence were unmatched, and her ability to hunt, pro-

tect her young cubs, and choose the right mates made her pack successful. Award-winning author and renowned wolf researcher Rick McIntyre turns his spotlighting scope on 06 and other remarkable female wolves, telling the true story of five generations of female leaders in Yellowstone National Park.  
**A Dangerous Business**  
*By Jane Smiley (Knopf) \$28*  
Pulitzer Prize-winning author Jane Smiley brings a rollicking murder mystery set in Gold Rush California as two young prostitutes follow a trail of missing girls. Side by side with her friend Jean, and inspired by her reading, especially by Edgar Allan Poe's detective Dupin, Eliza pieces together an array of clues to try to catch the killer. Both are determined not just to survive, but to find their way in a lawless town on the fringes of the Wild West.  
**All the Broken Places**  
*By John Boyne (Pamela Dorman Books) \$28*  
Gretel Fernsby, 91, has lived in the same mansion block in London for decades. She doesn't talk about her escape from Nazi Germany, but most of all, she doesn't talk about her father who was the commandant of one of the Reich's most notorious extermination camps. Then, a new family moves into the apartment below her. Gretel begins a friendship with the little boy, Henry. Now, Gretel faces a similar crossroads to one she encountered long ago. But now she can make a different choice. If she does, she will be forced to reveal the secrets she has spent a lifetime protecting.

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

December Library Events

Invitation to relax

*By Harriet Halbig*  
During this busy month of December, come to the library for a chance to relax. Sit by our wall of windows facing the duck pond and read a newspaper or magazine. Better yet, if the weather is good, feed the ducks (we have free cracked corn for the asking). There are benches where you can sit and enjoy the mountain

and pond views. Or check out a favorite holiday DVD or book.  
Children's programs will be on their regular schedule this month with *Story Time* on Tuesday and *Toddler Time* on Wednesday mornings. The *Family Story Time* in Palmer Lake is on Friday mornings.

**Please note:** All Pikes Peak Library locations will be closed all day on Dec. 24 and 25, close at 4 p.m. in Dec. 31 and remain closed on New Year's Day.  
Happy holidays from the library.  
*Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me*

Palmer Lake Historical Society

Historic flood remembered

*By Marlene Brown*  
One of the darkest days for Palmer Lake was Wednesday, June 16, 1965. When the skies turned black, after days of rain, twisting winds roared through the town, one of the most devastating tornados to ever hit Colorado took a place in history. As the residents

of Palmer Lake began to recover from the floods that followed, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) called it a "100-year flood." As the water flowed to the swollen South Platte after days of rain, bridges all over Denver gave way and roads and houses were washed away, leaving one of the costliest weather events to date.

Records indicate that May and June of 1965 were among the wettest on record, with 8 inches of rain in May and 1 to 2 inches every day for 15 days straight June 7-21. Fourteen inches of rain fell at Dawson Butte, north of Palmer Lake, in four hours. Roads were rivers and cow pastures were lakes. For more infor-



mation, see <https://coloradoencyclopedia.org/artile/south-platte-flood-1965>.

Houses in Palmer Lake were being flattened during the tornado, taken right off their foundations and moved down the street. Residents Bert and Norita Tatman were home with their daughters Rhonda, 8 and Becky, 6. They watched from their picture window as roofs went floating by—that’s when they grabbed the girls and went to the basement.

“The thing I remember the most was that it got so dark that the streetlights came on” said Norita Tatman. After the tornado passed and they climbed out of their basement through the stairwell, hail and rain hit their faces as they realized that part of their house and their roof were gone. Suddenly there was another roaring noise and the residents of Palmer Lake saw a

wall of water coming out of the canyon at the top of High Street and they watched as more houses were demolished in the flood. See [palmerdividehistory.org](http://palmerdividehistory.org) for more info.

The United States Air Force Academy, Lowery Air Force Base and Fort Carson came to help rescue the survivors. The Army and Air Force brought in generators for electricity, Mountain State Telephone provided telephone lines for emergency services, and the 7th Engineer Battalion from Fort Carson brought water purification equipment. Soldiers filled and stacked hundreds of sandbags at the Monument Lake Dam to hold flood waters back, according to the USGS.

Palmer Lake was known as a beautiful, sleepy, quiet mountain town. That month there were 30 houses destroyed. The residents came together to

help each other to safety and worked together to rebuild.

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The Palmer Lake Historical Society (PLHS) usually meets on the third Thursday of the month with a 6:30 social hour and presentation at 7 p.m. at the Palmer Lake Town Hall. The November meeting was cancelled due to weather concerns, and in lieu of a meeting in December, the PLHS will join the 89th Annual Palmer Lake Yule Log Hunt and Wassail Ceremony, Dec. 11 at 1 p.m. For more information on this and other events, see [www.townofpalmerlake.com](http://www.townofpalmerlake.com).

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

High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)  
December gardening

By Janet Sellers

The outdoor soil will soon be frozen, but we can remember to bring nature indoors. Our native plants have gone into winter sleep mode, but indoors we can create the climate. I need flowers around me—keeps me feeling cheery in the winter—so I keep orchids, Christmas cactus, and poinsettias around in the house.

The November community garden efforts by Palmer Ridge Key club members proved our fall compost layering strategies work even within a couple of months. By mid-November, the September and October compost layering had become viable, fluffy vegetable growing soil. Filled with earthworms, that soil went right into the garden beds on garden day. Everyone worked to weed out green grasses and layer dried-out plant leftovers to create compost for next year.

The deer —and a bear, too—left their “calling cards” and had eaten leaves and vegetables planned for harvest. At day’s end, we covered the beds with pine straw (local pine needles) and even planted some of the fallen marigold, bok choy, and radish seeds, which were our best seed crops this year. Great work, everybody!

No digging? Our ground may still allow us to dig into it. Many nurseries report that we can plant bare-root trees for a couple more weeks if the ground will allow it. I found information that explains the five-year plan for planting dormant, bare-root trees. It showed creating a planting zone around where the tree will grow, pulling out grasses up to a 6-foot diameter circle, and making a hole in the center.

Gardeners.com reports, “Although it was once common to modify the backfill soil with amendments—such as compost, peat moss, aged manure, and other ingredients—it is now considered best practice to leave the backfill unaltered or to add minimal amendments. This encourages roots to spread out into the native soil rather than staying within the confines of the planting hole.” And they say to not fertilize the first year. I realized the fact that my backyard apple trees had been fine for two years but failed in

three years due to not knowing this.

The key to success is to find the way the roots need to grow with three to five years of future growth in mind. The usual cone/hill shape backfill step helps new roots in spring, and soil should go as high as the root flare area of the trunk.

Janet Sellers is an avid “lazy” gardener, letting Mother Nature lead in the garden and overwintering to protect the wildlife cycle. Send your handy tips to [janetsellers@ocn.me](mailto:janetsellers@ocn.me)



Above and left: Students from Palmer Ridge High School Key club worked for several hours Nov. 12 to prepare the vegetable garden beds for overwintering. From left are Kaylei, Brooke, Nick, Caleb, John, Dane, Hiram, Connor, Amber, and Lily. Photo by Janet Sellers.

Art Matters

How to buy real art, within any budget



By Janet Sellers

Fine art collecting has a long history, especially among the ultra-rich. But with an eye to art collecting, any price point can work. The great thing about art is that you just need to like it and enjoy it. The price point isn’t really a factor, because there is more to the story, literally. Art is a purchase that can increase in value, too, compared to other things people buy.

“It’s easy to fall into the trap of ... thinking that taste equals the amount you spend or where you bought it,” says Colleen Cash, a senior vice president at Artnet, an online art auctions platform. “I think some of the most beautiful collections are the ones that have meaningful stories.” We often find engaging stories about the artist and art when talking to the artist personally (great fun) or in a gallery or catalog.

Art for where we live or work can be paintings, drawings, prints, photography, sculpture, and more. Placement is key, but that is an enjoyable learning experience as well. Pieces by emerging artists are likely to be less expensive than established artists. The term “established” usually connects the dots between fame and fortune for both the artist and the collector. Finding art early in the art and artist’s creative timeline often results in a lower price that rises with time for secondary sales markets.

Prints are often lower in price, because they are made in specific editions or batches. The fewer the prints in the edition, the more rare and valuable the art print. The art purchase will benefit the artist and their hard work directly, along with the gallery venue that invests its time and place as well. Artists are also more often creating their own online catalogs and

shipping the artwork to the new owners be it for oneself or as a gift.

Janet Sellers is a local artist, writer, and speaker, with a focus on helping develop local cultural awareness in the community. Contact her at: [janetsellers@ocn.me](mailto:janetsellers@ocn.me)



Above: When we obtain the art we like, that we connect with, we can enjoy the hunt as well as the owning—and legacy—of the artwork. And, conveniently, just by changing out the artworks for our rooms, we can create an ambiance at will, without needing to paint walls or purchase furniture. We can take down a grouping and put up a single, large piece. This can offer a dramatic effect easily and quickly. Photo of local artists’ art by Daryl Munsen, Jefferson Studio Gallery.



Snapshots of Our Community

SPCS Chess Tournament, Oct. 1



**Above:** The St. Peter Catholic School (SPCS) gym was filled with kids playing chess on Oct. 1. Students of all ages and abilities from Monument and Colorado Springs took part in the tournament run by SPCS parent Domingo Astiasaran. Caleb Frohman won among sixth-graders and above. Jack Moylan came in first among third- to fifth-graders. *Photo courtesy of SPCS.*

Districts receive awards, Oct. 26



**Above:** On Oct. 26, El Paso County presented American Recovery Plan Act awards to Monument Sanitation District and Forest View Acres Water District. Monument Sanitation received an award of \$684,025 and Forest View \$1.55 million for infrastructure improvements. Representing the Forest View Acres Water District (top photo) are, from left, Paul McKean, Nancy Wilkins, Vince Guthrie, and Brad Hogan. Representing Monument Sanitation (lower photo) are, from left, John Howe, Mark Parker, and Dave Frisch. *Top photo by Gwen Dall. Bottom photo courtesy of El Paso County.*

Empty Bowls raised over \$19K

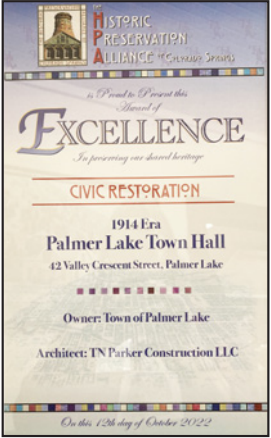


**Above:** This year's Empty Bowls event was held on Oct. 12 at Lewis-Palmer High School. The Kiwanis Club of Monument Hill sponsors this event, which provides handmade bowls from local artisans along with food from local restaurants. This year's event raised over \$19,000 for Tri-Lakes Cares (TLC), a local nonprofit that supports those in need in the community. TLC hosted a silent auction with over 130 items offered by local vendors, artists, restaurants, and other donors. Volunteers helped solicit items, prepared baskets, created and sold floral arrangements, set up and tore down the day of the event, monitored the auction tables and answered questions, and handled the cashing. It takes many hands to make an event successful, and TLC is grateful for all the support. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

GMS and TN Parker receive award



**Above:** At the Oct. 27 Palmer Lake Board of Trustees meeting, Mayor Bill Bass awarded the Historic Preservation Alliance 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 Construction LLC. From left are Bass, Parker, Horton, Cramer, and Town Manager Dawn Collins. On Oct. 20, Collins spoke to guests in the historic Palmer Lake Town Hall before the Palmer Lake Historical Society (PLHS) monthly meeting. PLHS members and the town contributed to and completed some of the restoration, along with TN Parker. Peter Blaney 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). *Photo by Su Osgersby Ketchmark and Jackie Burhans. Caption by Jackie Burhans and Natalie Barszcz.*



John Adams at TLCA, Oct. 29

**Right:** On Oct. 29, John Adams returned to the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA) for the ninth time with a solo tribute to the music of John Denver. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the time Adams began playing Denver's songs with just his guitar. He thought performing solo, playing his six- and 12-string guitars, and accompanied by his wife Amanda on violin on only a few songs, was a fitting anniversary tribute. Adams met Denver over 30 times and related several stories throughout the evening about their friendship. Stating that the TLCA "is something special because it is such an intimate setting," Adams proceeded to play a mix of familiar and not so familiar Denver songs. The songs included *Rocky Mountain High*, *To the Wild Country*, *The Thought of You*, *I'm Sorry*, and *Fly Away*. *Photo by David Futey.*





Ham Radio Tech Day, Oct. 29



**Above:** Over 50 amateur radio operators, both new Hams and experienced “elmers,” gathered at the Black Forest Fire Station on Oct. 29 to learn and share all about antennas, which make sending and receiving radio wave communications possible. Bob KØNR and Joyce KØJJW demonstrated VHF and UHF antennas used primarily for local communications. Topics included: radio wave and antenna basics, antenna building, antenna safety, antennas used in cars, on mountain tops, and hiking in national parks, HF antennas used for longer range communications, stealth antennas, and plenty of demonstrations outside in the beautiful weather. Hams communicate for fun but also provide emergency communication locally and around the globe. See <https://w0tlm.org/club-meeting/presentations> for videos of the presentations and to learn more about the Tri-Lakes Radio Association’s weekly radio nets (to practice getting on the air locally) and in-person monthly meetings. *Caption by Loren Anderson and Lisa Hatfield. Photo by Lisa Hatfield.*

Black Forest Arts & Crafts Fall Show



**Above:** The 58th Annual Black Forest Arts and Crafts Guild Fall Show was held Nov. 2-5 at the Black Forest Community Center on Black Forest Road. The show showcased hand-crafted items and culinary delights. Membership is open to all Black Forest residents. The Guild raises money during the spring and fall shows for its scholarship fund. It provides assistance for higher education for students who live the Black Forest area. For more information, see [www.bfacg.org](http://www.bfacg.org) or check out the Guild on Facebook. *Photos by Marlene Brown.*

OCN mailing day, Nov. 3



**Above:** Without citizen volunteers, this newspaper would not appear in your mailbox each month to tell you about “what was discussed and what was decided” at the public deliberations of so many Tri-Lakes area governmental bodies. On Nov. 3, this is the team that helped count and tub more than 22,000 newspapers for the USPS. Front row from left: Bill Davis, Curtis Jack, Sue Thompson. Back row from left: Arlene Fisher-Olson, Sarah McMullen, Melinda Reichal, John Howe, Michael Weinfeld, David Futey, Mike Valley, Kim Valley, Allen Alchian, Jim Hazuka, Carla Lopez. Not pictured: Rusty Lorenz and many other volunteers who did meeting reporting, accounting, ads sales, newspaper stacks deliveries, truck driving, editing, and graphic layout. We’re looking for more volunteers to help with all these tasks. See information on page 29 to find out more. *Photo by Lisa Hatfield*

Cruisers donate food to TLC



**Above and left:** The Tri-Lakes Cruisers Car Club of Monument donated turkeys, hams, and plant-based roasts to Tri-Lakes Cares (TLC) families on Nov. 6. More than 50 items weighing more than 375 pounds were donated. That was enough to feed 200 people for Thanksgiving. It’s the biggest holiday food donation in Cruisers history. The food drive was organized by Cruisers member Barb Beeson pictured at left. Jessica Myers, in front, is joined by members of the Cruisers at the TLC facility on Jefferson Street in Monument. *Photos by Lon Wartman.*

Hazel Miller at TLCA, Nov. 12



**Left:** Hazel Miller and her band The Collective returned to the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA) to an enthusiastic audience on Nov. 12. Miller, called a “force of nature” due to her powerful voice and range, said she got her start at honky-tonks in Louisville, Ken., saying they were “the kind of places your shoes stick to the floor.” The playlist demonstrated

the depth and breadth of Miller and the instrumental abilities of the four-piece band. The songs played this evening included The Beatles’ Come Together, Bobby Blue Band’s Further On Up the Road, Nancy Wilson’s The Very Thought of You, Neville Brothers’ Yellow Moon, a Steely Dan medley and Aretha Franklin’s Natural Woman. Mark your calendar as Miller will return to the TLCA to celebrate her 70th birthday with an Aretha Franklin Tribute Concert on June 24. *Photo by David Futey.*



## DCC Fall Band Concert, Nov. 10



**Above:** Three Discovery Canyon High Instrumental Program bands performed at their annual Fall Concert on Nov. 10. Under the direction of band Director Kevin Whitelaw, the Jazz Ensemble opened the concert with three songs including Miles Davis's *So What*. They were followed by the String Orchestra, performing three songs including *Fright Night*, arranged by Larry Moore. It included snippets of theme music from *The Addams Family*, *Psycho*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *The Munsters*, *The Alfred Hitchcock Hour*, and *Jaws*. The pictured Symphonic Band closed the concert with *Nessun Dorma* by Giacomo Puccini and *Foundry* by John Mackey. Whitelaw said the bands had been rehearsing for three months. They received numerous standing ovations from the near-capacity audience. The next concerts will be a Jazz Night on Feb. 16 followed by the orchestra and band on Feb. 23. *Photo by David Futey.*

## Chamber host non-profit night



**Above and below:** On Nov. 15, the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce hosted the Business After Hours/Non-Profit Night at the Tri-Lakes YMCA. Several local nonprofit organizations set up displays to inform guests of their missions and how volunteers might contribute. Shown are, from left, Steve Jeroslow and Marlene Brown representing Friends of Fox Run Park and John Howe representing *Our Community News*. Brown is also a volunteer with OCN. If you are interested in volunteering for these or other local organizations, they would be happy to hear from you. You may contact the Chamber website for a list of exhibitors at the event: [www.trilakeschamber.com/contact.html](http://www.trilakeschamber.com/contact.html). *Photo by Steve Pate.*



## Silver Key at Tri-Lakes ribbon cutting



**Above:** Sue Walker (right), director of the Silver Key at Tri-Lakes senior center, with Melissa Evans-Bagnall, former Silver Alliance board president. *Photo by Steve Pate.*

*By Steve Pate*

As OCN reported in September, the Tri-Lakes Senior Center (TLSC) moved from Lewis-Palmer High School to the Grace Best Elementary School building, 66 Jefferson St., Monument. On Nov. 14, Silver Key and the TLSC held the official ribbon-cutting and grand opening at the new location. TLSC merged with Silver Key and is now known as Silver Key at Tri-Lakes and provides many services to local seniors.

Local dignitaries, including K C Somers, School District 38 superintendent, Laura Kronick, Melissa Evans-Bagnall, Silver Key CEO Jason DeaBueno, and Sue Walker, director of the senior center, made comments ahead of the ribbon-cutting ceremony by the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce.

The new location at 66 Jefferson St. has more room for activities to help seniors maintain social connections as well as help with physical and mental well-being. The center accommodates physical activities like yoga, tai-chi, line dancing, and others intended to help seniors maintain flexibility, strength, and balance. Other activities are aimed at sharpening mental agility, and some seniors help with children's literacy at the elementary school.

Walker expressed appreciation for the supportive relationship with D38, and that was reinforced by Somers. DeaBueno indicated that a stand-alone facility may be sought at some time but this new location is an excellent facility.

Please refer to the website, [www.Silverkey.org](http://www.Silverkey.org), for details on scheduled groups and events at the center and other important information, e.g., how to find transportation to grocery shopping, medical appointments, and other services.

You can contact Silver Key at Tri-Lakes senior center at 719-464-6873 and leave a call-back number.

*Steve Pate may be contacted at [stevepate@ocn.me](mailto:stevepate@ocn.me)*



**Above:** The Silver Key at Tri-Lakes ribbon-cutting was attended by many local dignitaries. From left: Derek Wilson (chief strategic officer, Silver Key); Monument Trustee Kenneth Kimple; District 38 Superintendent KC Somers; Palmer Lake Mayor-Elect Glant Havenar; Melissa Evans-Bagnall (former Silver Alliance board president); Monument Mayor-Elect Mitchell LaKind; D38 Board of Education Secretary Tiffney Upchurch; Colorado Springs City Councilman Dave Donelson; and Silver Key President/CEO Jason DeaBueno. *Photo by Steve Pate.*



Gobble Squabble, Nov. 19



**Above:** Monumental Impact hosted its Second Annual Monumental Impact for Technology, Engineering and Entrepreneurship (MITEE) Gobble Squabble on Nov. 19 at Grace Best in Monument. Members of D38's Bearbotics team and other robotics teams took part in scrimmages. The event also featured demonstrations of various robot programs. In the photo, two of Bearbotics' For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST) Tech Challenge (FTC) teams look for scores with their robot while referees look for penalties. *Photo by Mike Hinkle*

Alpaca Extravaganza, Nov. 26-27



**Above:** The 17th Annual Holiday Alpaca Extravaganza was held Nov. 26-27 at the Black Forest Community Center. The center was stocked with alpaca-themed items, including clothing, socks, mittens, toys, blankets, hats, yarns, and crafty items, all made from alpaca wool. There were even alpacas outside for kids to pet. For more information on where you can see alpacas, email Pete Ziek (pictured above) pjziek@aol.com or Barbara Ziek bziek@aol.com of the Wild Hair Alpacas, members of Alpaca Owners Association, to make an appointment. *Photo by Marlene Brown.*

Small Business Saturday, Nov. 26



**Above:** Many locals and visitors enjoyed Small Business Saturday on Nov. 26 in downtown Monument. Shoppers said they like "shopping local," and this event is a good reminder to support local businesses of all types, including our local art galleries, home décor, and gift shops. Here, locals and their out-of-town guests peruse The Roost for their holiday purchases. *Photo by Janet Sellers.*

Monument Window Art, Nov. 20



**Above and right:** Local artist Kris Gideon helped make historic downtown Monument festive for the holidays. Gideon painted colorful holiday scenes on windows of stores on Second Street for several days including Nov. 20. The finished product is shown at right. This is her third year of painting window scenes in town. Gideon teaches beginning art classes at Monument Library. You can get more information on her website [krisgideon.com](http://krisgideon.com). *Photo by Michael Weinfeld.*



Mt. Herman road closure



**Above:** This is a heads-up for those who use Mount Herman Road (MHR) to access FS 716 trailhead. An experienced and knowledgeable hiker, Randy Phillips, informed the local hiking community that the Pikes Peak Ranger District decided in September to seasonally close MHR. If this decision is approved at a higher level, the MHR gate will be closed at the corner of MHR and Red Rocks Drive for winters. For those who hike up by way of the Windsock trail or others, this will not be a problem. You won't, however, be able to drive up to FS 716 trailhead. *Photo by Steve Pate*



## Palmer Lake Star Lighting, Nov. 26



**Above and below:** Every year since 1935, excluding the years during WWII, the Star Lighting has been a holiday tradition in Palmer Lake. The Star is listed on the Colorado State Register of Historical Properties, according to Jack Anthony, who prepared the nomination for the listing. On Nov. 26, the tradition continued as about 350 people turned out for the Palmer Lake Fire Department (PLFD) Chili Supper at the Palmer Lake Town Hall. The funds raised by the Chili Supper go toward maintaining the Star, and volunteers from the PLFD do the work. Santa entertained those enjoying chili before lighting the Star on Sundance Mountain at 7 p.m. *Photos by Steve Pate.*



## Historic Barn Razed



**Above:** The historic red barn in Monument located just off the railroad tracks on Front Street, home to years of July Fourth square dances and other social events, and once owned by former Mayor “Si” Sibell and his wife Dorothy, is gone. Developers tore it down to make way for apartments, shops, and restaurants. You can see the barn in the top photo taken last month. The barn is missing in the bottom photo taken Nov. 28. Sibell built the barn in 1990. He and his wife lived nearby. Their house was torn down earlier. In addition to the social events held at the barn, the Sibells’ memorial services were held there, too. Si Sibell died in 2018, his wife a year later. The front of the barn once featured a painting of Sibell’s horse Baron, who used to be allowed to walk freely in town. That painting was removed when the property was sold. Its whereabouts are unknown. *Top photo by Chris Jeub. Bottom photo and caption by Michael Weinfeld.*

## Why advertise in OCN?

- OCN is mailed FREE to every resident and business in the Tri-Lakes area. We mail more than 21,700 copies every month and put another 700 copies in stacks throughout the area. OCN has the largest mailed circulation and the third-largest circulation among local newspapers in El Paso County after The Gazette and The Colorado Springs Independent. We put copies of OCN into the hands of those people most likely to buy your products or services: local residents and businesses.
- OCN is a primary source for Tri-Lakes area news. Since its founding in 2001, OCN has been presenting unbiased, detailed coverage of Tri-Lakes area governmental entities and their deliberations and actions. Credibility is key. Advertising in a credible medium typically rubs off on the advertisers in that media.
- OCN gives preference to Tri-Lakes area businesses. As part of OCN’s long-standing commitment to encouraging the economic health of the Tri-Lakes area, we offer a significantly discounted ad rate to Tri-Lakes area businesses as a way to help local businesses like yours succeed.
- OCN’s low ad rates and monthly publication schedule help stretch your ad budget. OCN has one of the lowest ad costs per printed copy of any local publication. Since OCN is a monthly publication, your ad is out there for a month—more than four times longer than other local papers. Many of our advertisers tell us they’re still getting calls in the third and fourth week of the month.
- OCN doesn’t use contracts. You aren’t tied down. Adjust your advertising month-to-month to meet your changing needs. Our advertisers run ads in OCN because they see benefit in it, not because they’re bound by a contract they signed months before. To reward frequent advertisers, OCN has a Frequent Advertiser Bonus (FAB) rewards program. You earn up to 10% of your ad cost as a reward you can use to reduce the cost of future OCN advertising. The more you advertise with OCN, the more you save. Thanks to our FAB rewards program, OCN advertisers have saved more than \$102,000!
- You are supporting a good thing. Your advertising dollars support a unique all-volunteer, Tri-Lakes-focused effort to present factual, comprehensive news to all Tri-Lakes area residents and businesses.

### And the best reason of all: It works!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



An important message for our readers

# 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](mailto:johnheiser@ocn.me) to see how you can contribute. Contact John today! He is waiting to hear from you. Together we can ensure that OCN continues to provide a vital service to our wonderful Tri-Lakes community.

## Our Community Notices

By Janet Sellers

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

### 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/nutritionalservices](http://www.lewispalmer.org/nutritionalservices).

### 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](http://distracted.codot.gov).

### Colorado Auto Safety and Traction Law

During winter storms, or when conditions require, CDOT will implement the Passenger Vehicle Traction Law. CDOT can implement the Passenger Vehicle Traction and Chain Laws on any state highway; the law requires specific tire tread depths, chains (or an approved alternative traction device such as Tire Socks). See <https://www.codot.gov/travel/winter-driving/tractionlaw>.

### Winter Car Safety per CDOT

Make sure all vehicle systems are in safe operating condition. Even locally, include: sturdy scraper/snowbrush, snow shovel, sand for traction, flashlight, tow strap, jumper cables or battery jump starter device, extra batteries, multi-tool (leatherman type), blanket or sleeping bag, gallon jug of water, first aid and essential medications, flares/reflectors to signal for help and warn other motorists, battery or crank-powered radio for emergency broadcasts. Checklist: <https://www.codot.gov/travel/winter-driving/winter-preparedness>.

### 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](http://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](http://mycolorado.state.us). Some restrictions apply to drivers aged 21-80, and drivers over 80 need a special doctor’s statement. Coloradans who are concerned about an elder family member’s ability to drive should email [dor\\_mvhelpdesk@state.co.us](mailto:dor_mvhelpdesk@state.co.us).

### DMV online and kiosks

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

mation. See [epcdrives.com](http://epcdrives.com).

### MVEA offers rebates

For information on MVEA’s energy efficiency rebates, visit [www.mvea.coop/save-energy-money/rebates/](http://www.mvea.coop/save-energy-money/rebates/), or call 800-388-9881. See ad on page 12.

### Free search for Unclaimed Property

Unclaimed property is tangible or intangible property that has had no activity for a specific period of time. Once the property is in the custody of the state of Colorado, the State will maintain custody of the property in perpetuity until the rightful owner or heirs come forward to claim. The State Treasurer’s Office provides this service free of charge. Colorado: Great Colorado Payback - [Colorado.gov](http://Colorado.gov) ([findyourunclaimedproperty.com](http://findyourunclaimedproperty.com)) SAME AS: <https://colorado.findyourunclaimedproperty.com/app/what-is-ucp>

### 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.

### 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](mailto:Volunteer@wmmi.org).

### Free services for seniors

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

### Senior Beat newsletter—subscribe for free

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

### 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](http://www.elpasocountyhealth.org/volunteering-and-donations), for groups like Care and Share, Crossfire Ministries, blood donations, Early Connections (volunteer from home opportunity), foster an animal, Medical Reserve Corps of El Paso County, Salvation Army, Silver Key, and United Way (ongoing opportunities).

- 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.american towns.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](http://www.childrensliteracycenter.org) or email Christine Jeffson at [Christine@childrensliteracycenter.org](mailto:Christine@childrensliteracycenter.org).

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# Our Community Calendar

By Janet 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

- **El Paso County Planning Commission meeting**, Thu., **Dec. 1, 15**, 9 am, Regional Development Center, 2880 International Circle, Colo. Springs. Meetings are live-streamed on the El Paso County News & Information Channel at <https://www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel>. Normally meets first & third Thu. (as required). Info: 719-520-6300, <https://planningdevelopment.elpasoco.com>.
- **Forest Lakes Metropolitan District, Pinon Pines Metropolitan District 1, 2 & 3 board meeting**, Mon., **Dec. 5**. Typically meets quarterly on the first Mon., 4 pm Meetings are held via teleconference. For virtual joining instructions and updates see [www.forest-lakesmetrodistrict.com](http://www.forest-lakesmetrodistrict.com).
- **Monument Board of Trustees meeting**, Mon., **Dec. 5**, 12, 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](http://www.townofmonument.org/260/Board-of-Trustees) for remote attendance links.
- **El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) regular meeting**, usually **every Tue.**, 9 am. Please note there is no meeting scheduled for Dec. 13 or 27. View agendas and meetings at [www.agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso](http://www.agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso). BOCC land use meetings are being held every first and third Tuesday of the month as needed at 1 pm Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade Ave., Suite 150, Colo. Springs. Info: 719-520-6430.
- **Palmer Lake Board of Adjustments**, Tue., **Dec. 6**, 5 pm, Palmer Lake Elementary School Library, 115 Upper Glenway, Palmer Lake. Normally meets first Tues.
- **Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District board meeting**, in person or via Zoom, Wed., **Dec. 7**, 7 pm, Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining instructions at [www.bffire.org](http://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,**Dec. 7**, 6:30 pm., Station 1, 18650 Highway 105, Monument. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining instructions at [www.tlmfire.org](http://www.tlmfire.org) or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin, at 719-484-0911. Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday.
- **Palmer Lake Board of Trustees meeting**, Thu., **Dec. 8**, 5 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 42 Valley Crescent, Usually meets second and fourth Thu. Info: 719-481-2953. [www.townofpalmerlake.com](http://www.townofpalmerlake.com).
- **Donala Water & Sanitation District board meeting**, Thu., **Dec. 8**, 1:30 pm, 15850 Holbein Dr. In 2023, meets fourth Wed., Check the website for the access code for the electronic meeting. Info: 719-488-3603, [www.donalawater.org](http://www.donalawater.org).
- **Monument Academy School Board meeting**, Thu., **Dec. 8**, 6 pm at the East Campus in the band room. 4303 Pinehurst Circle. Meets second Thu. Info 719-481-1950, <https://www.monumentacademy.net/school-board/board-meeting-minutes/>.
- **Lewis-Palmer School District 38 board meeting**, Mon., **Dec. 12**, 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](http://www.youtube.com/user/LPSDCommunity), agenda, sup-  
porting documents at <https://go.boarddocs.com/co/lewispalmer/Board.nsf/vpublic>. Info: 719- 488-4700, [vwood@lewispalmer.org](mailto:vwood@lewispalmer.org), [www.lewispalmer.org](http://www.lewispalmer.org) district's YouTube channel: [www.youtube.com/user/LPSDCommunity](http://www.youtube.com/user/LPSDCommunity). Contact Vicki Wood. Phone: 719.481.9546 Email: [vwood@lewispalmer.org](mailto:vwood@lewispalmer.org) Web-site: <https://www.lewispalmer.org>.
- **Monument Board of Trustees meeting**, Mon., **Dec. 12**, 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](http://www.townofmonument.org/260/Board-of-Trustees) for remote attendance links.
- **Tri-Lakes Wastewater Facility Joint Use Committee meeting**, Tue., **Dec 13**, 10 am 16510 Mitchell Ave. Meets second Tue. Info: Bill Burks, 719-481-4053.
- **Triview Metropolitan District board meeting**, Tue., **Dec. 13**, 5:30 pm, 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302, Monument. Normally meets third Thu. Info: 719-488-6868, [www.triviewmetro.com](http://www.triviewmetro.com).
- **Palmer Lake Sanitation District board meeting**, Wed., **Dec. 14**, 9 am, call-in only: 650-479-3208, Access Code 76439078, 120 Middle Glenway. Meets second Wed. Info: 719-481-2732. [www.plsd.org](http://www.plsd.org).
- **Monument Planning Commission meeting**, Wed., **Dec. 14**, 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](http://www.townofmonument.org/263/Planning-Commission-Board-of-Adjustment). Info: 719-884-8028. [www.townofmonument.org](http://www.townofmonument.org).

- **Woodmoor Improvement Association board meet-ing**, Wed., **Dec. 14**, 7 pm, Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. Normally meets fourth Wed. Info: 719-488-2693, [www.woodmoor.org](http://www.woodmoor.org).
- **Monument Sanitation District board meeting**, Wed., **Dec. 21**, 9 a.m., 130 Second St. Zoom meeting. Find joining instructions on the website. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-4886, [www.colorado.gov/msd](http://www.colorado.gov/msd).
- **Woodmoor Water & Sanitation District board meeting**, Wed., **Dec. 21**, 1 pm, 1845 Woodmoor Dr., Monument. Normally meets second Mon. Info: 719-488-2525, [www.woodmoorwater.com](http://www.woodmoorwater.com).
- **Academy Water and Sanitation District board meeting**, Wed., **Dec. 21**, 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., **Dec. 21**, 6 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-2953, [www.townofpalmerlake.com](http://www.townofpalmerlake.com).
- **D38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee, No meeting in Dec.**, usually meets 6-8 pm, third Tues. Next meeting **Jan. 10**, Kilmer Elementary School Info: [tmckee@lewispalmer.org](mailto:tmckee@lewispalmer.org) or 719-785-4243
- **Donald Wescott Fire Protection District board meeting, no meeting in Dec.** Usually meets in person or via Zoom, fourth Wed., 4:30 pm, Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining instructions at [www.wescottfire.org](http://www.wescottfire.org) or contact Administrative Assistant Stacey Popovich at 719-488-8680.

## WEEKLY & MONTHLY EVENTS

- **Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO) meeting**, Sat., **Jan 14**, 10 am-12 pm., Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. Members of local HOAs welcome. Usually meets bi-monthly second **Sat.** of the month. [www.nepco.org](http://www.nepco.org).
- **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](mailto:stherese@benethillmonastery.org) . See ad on page 3.
- **Monument Hill Kiwanis Club meeting**, every **Sat.**, 8 am. [www.MHKiwanis.org](http://www.MHKiwanis.org), [MonumentHillKiwanis@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://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](http://www.mereowx.org/neighborhood-net) or [contactus@mereowx.org](mailto: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](http://www.thewineseller.net).
- **Palmer Lake Art Group**, second **Sat.** A variety of art programs are offered after the social gathering and business meeting. Guests welcome. 300 Hwy 105, NE corner of I-25 and 105. 9:30 am. Info: 719-460-4179, [www.palmerlakeartgroup.com](http://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](http://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 in-person (no registration necessary) and live stream at [www.tlumc.org/live](http://www.tlumc.org/live). Watch live or replay: [www.facebook.com/tlumc](http://www.facebook.com/tlumc), [www.youtube.com/tlumc.org](http://www.youtube.com/tlumc.org). Info: 719-488-1365, [www.tlumc.org](http://www.tlumc.org). 20256 Hunting Downs Way, Monument. See ad on page 2.
- **Fuel Church** Sunday Service, every **Sun.** Service times, 11:00 am Live service streaming at [www.fuelchurch.org](http://www.fuelchurch.org) at 11:40 am on [www.fuelchurch.org](http://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](mailto: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.ridgeviewcolorado.org](http://www.ridgeviewcolorado.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-recovery-group-3/](http://www.liferecoverygroups.com/meetings/life-recovery-group-3/).
- **Amateur ham radio W0TLM** (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](http://www.W0TLM.com)
- **La Leche League breastfeeding support group** - Every second **Mon.**, 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](mailto: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.trilakes-seniors.org](http://www.trilakes-seniors.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](http://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. 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" Mon.-Fri., noon-12:30 pm, Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy. 105, Palmer Lake. Monthly menu in Senior Beat newsletter. Stay for bingo the second Thu. Reservations requested: 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](http://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](mailto:dwgritz@gmail.com) or 719-649-9220.
- **Senior Social**, fourth **Wed.**, 12455 Black Forest Rd. Info: [www.aarpchapter1100blackforest.weekly.com](http://www.aarpchapter1100blackforest.weekly.com).
- **Tri-Lakes Church of Christ** Wednesday night fellowship classes, every **Wed.**, 6-7:30 pm, 20450 Beacon Lite Road, Monument (corner of Beacon Lite & County Line Roads). Info: 719-488-9613, [gregsmith@trilakeschurch.org](mailto:gregsmith@trilakeschurch.org), [www.trilakeschurch.org](http://www.trilakeschurch.org).
- **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://tlcruisers.weebly.com>.
- **AARP Black Forest #1100**, second **Wed.**, noon. All ages welcome. In-person, Black Forest Lutheran Church, 12455 Black Forest Rd.
- **Tri Lakes Women's Club** monthly meeting. Usually meets second **Wed.**, 11:30 am, Eisenhower Golf Club, USAFA, 3170 Golf Course Rd. TLWC members. To join: [membership@tlwc.net](mailto:membership@tlwc.net)
- **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.
  - **Pikes Peak Genealogical Society**, **Wed.**, **Dec. 14**, 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
  - **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#.
  - **Palmer Lake Historical Society, no meeting in Dec.** Jan. meeting is a potluck dinner, Jan. 19, 2023, 6:00- 8:00 pm. Usually meets third Thu., doors open 6:30pm, meeting 7:30pm. Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent St.
  - **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.
  - **Tri-Lakes Monument radio Association**, Details: Contact Bob Witte, 719-659-3727.
  - **Monument Dementia Caregiver Support Group** - Every second **Sat.** 9:45 - 11:15 am. Meets in Person, First National Bank Monument ( 581 Highway 105, Monument, CO 80132). Meets monthly, 2nd Sat. Contact: Registration is required, call 800.272.3900 or email khare@alz.org to register.

SPECIAL EVENTS

- **VOLUNTEER TODAY! Our Community News mailing days**, **Thu.**, **Dec 1**, 2022, **Jan. 5**, 2023; 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.
- **Small Town Christmas**, **Sat.**, **Dec. 3**, 10 am-6 pm. Special events and treats at shops and streets in Downtown Monument. Tree lighting at 3pm in Limbach Park, Front St. at 2nd St. See ad on page 2
- **Monument Hill Kiwanis Club 16th Annual North Pole at Tri-Lakes Arts and Crafts Fair.** **Sat, Dec, 3**, 9-4pm, Grace Best Education Center, 66 Jefferson Street.
- **Covered Treasures Bookstore**, **Sat.**, **Dec. 3**, 1-3. Small Town Christmas. Heidi Koland signs *If I Could Ride a Train*. **Sat. Dec.10**, 1-3, Stewart Green and Susan Joy Paul sign *Best Lake Hikes Colorado*; Jamie Siebrase signs *Mythbusting the Great Outdoors*. **Sat, Dec. 17**, 12-3, Susan Mathis signs *Peyton's Promise*, *Rachel's Reunion*; Jodi Bowersox signs her *Rocky Mountain, Anonymous, Lightning Rider series* and her children's picture books. 105 Second Street, Monument.
- **Free, fun, holiday ornament making with Friends of Fox Run Park** **Sat. Dec. 10**, all are welcome. Wooden "tree cookie" ornaments, refreshments. Warming hut at Twin Ponds, Fox Run Park. Info: friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com, https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofFoxRunPark
- **A Christmas Carol play**, **Fri.-Sat.**, **Dec. 9-10**, 7 pm,

- (plus 2 pm on Dec. 10). Palmer Lake Town Hall, tickets: funkylittletheater.org. See ad on page 9.
- **YMCA 5K race series**, one great cause. Jingle Jog **Sat.**, **Dec. 10**. Stroller and dog friendly. Now enrolling for basketball. See ad on page 6.
  - **New Fangled Nutcracker** **Sat.**, **Dec. 10**, 5 pm, Ent Center for the Arts. See ad page 5.
  - **89th Annual Yule Log Hunt**, **Sun.**, **Dec. 11**, 1-3 pm, meet at Palmer Lake Town Hall, 42 Valley Crescent St., Palmer Lake 80133.
  - **Christmas concert by Soli Deo Gloria Choir**, entire Vivaldi *Gloria* concert, chamber orchestra, Doug Bistrow guest bassist. Free - bring a friend! **Sat. Dec. 17**, 3 pm. First Lutheran Church, 1515 N.Cascade, Colorado Springs. Donations appreciated.
  - **20th annual Tri-Lakes Music Association Christmas Cantata!** **Fri.-Sat.**, **Dec. 16-17**, 7 pm; **Sun. Dec.18**, 2pm. Free of charge for all. Free will offering collected during concert, with proceeds going to Tri-Lakes Cares, scholarships for two local high school seniors. Palmer Ridge High School auditorium, 19255 Frontage Rd. Matt or Renee Manning, trilakesmusic@gmail.com. 719-325-9507, 719-271-3643. See ad on page 11.
  - **Hometown Christmas concert**, **Sat.**, **Dec. 17**, 5:30 pm, music from Ashtonz. home-prepared foods including soups, salads and desserts, crafts for kids; St. Nick himself visits! Capacity limited, RSVP asap, Admission: \$18 adults, \$9 12 and under. Black Forest Community Center, 12530 Black Forest Rd. Info: HometownChristmas2022.eventbrite.com. Call/text (719) 649-0058.
  - **Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce, Networking**, **Tue.**, **Dec. 20**, 5 pm-7:00 pm, members free, \$15 for non-members. Details: www.trilakeschamber.com. 719-481-3282.
  - **FriendsGive!** **Wed.**, **Dec. 21**, 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
  - **Benet Hill Monastery - Christmas and New Year services:** **Sat.**, **Dec. 24**, Christmas Eve vigil 5 p.m., **Sun.**, **Dec. 25**, Christmas Day worship 10:15 a.m., **Jan. 1**, New Year's Eve Taize worship 6 p.m. New Year's Day worship 10:15 a.m. 3190 Benet Lane Colorado Springs 80921 www.bennethillmonastery.org. See ad on page 3.
  - **Affordable Flooring Connection** special offers through **Dec. 31**, see ad on page 2.
  - **Cornerstone Cleaners**, special offers through **Dec. 31.**, 1030 W. Baptist Road, near King Soopers. See ad on page 4.
  - **Eagle Wine & Spirits**, special offers through **Dec. 31.**, Baptist Road next to King Soopers. See ad on page 3.
  - **Monument Cleaners**, special offers through **Dec.31.**, 15932 Jackson Creek Pkwy., in Monument Marketplace. See ad on page 5.
  - **Monumental Med Spa**, special offers through **Dec. 31.**; at the loft, 4 Hwy. 105 Palmer Lake. See ad on page 7.
  - **Noel Relief Centers**, new patient special. 950 Baptist Rd #130, Monument. See ad on page 7.
  - **Tri-lakes Collision**, special offers through **Dec. 31**. See ad on page 5.
  - **The Living Room Plants**, special offers through **Dec.**

- **31.**, 12229 Voyager Pkwy, Suite 100. See ad on page 5.
- **Palmer Lake Outdoor Classic youth hockey day**, **Fri.**, **Jan. 6**, 6 pm face-off, Jan. 7, 9 am, start. On Palmer Lake. Proceeds support Outdoor Classic and Lewis Palmer hockey team.

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

Letters to Our Community

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

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

If you have not received an acknowledgement two days after your email submission or one week after you mailed your letter, please contact 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.

Content

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

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

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

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

Look for our next issue  
Saturday, Jan. 7

**Ad space reservations due: Fri., Dec. 16**  
**Finished ad artwork due: Fri., Dec. 23**  
**Letters to the editor due: Fri., Dec. 23**  
**Calendar items due: Fri., Dec. 30**

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



Our Community News

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

OCN is published on the first Saturday of each month by Colorado Cooperative Association

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For advertising information, contact

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