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Issue #266 — Volume 23 Number 5 — Saturday, May 6, 2023

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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 29-31 for event locations and other details of these and many other local events.

- **OCN mailing day**, Thu., **May 4 & June 1**, approx. 9 am-2 pm.
- **WMMI Lecture**, Tue., **May 9**, 4 pm. *Easy hikes to the hidden past.*
- **NEPCO meeting**, Sat., **May 13**, 10 am-12 pm. HOA legal topics.
- **Taste of Tri Lakes Cares**, Tue., **May 9**, 5:30 p.m.
- **WMMI Family Days**, Sat., **May 13**, Thu., **June 1**. See ad on page 8.
- **D38 Spring Community Connection**, Tue., **May 16**, 1 pm. See ad on page 13.
- **Art Hop**, Thu., **May 18**, 5-8 pm. See ad on page 2.
- **YMCA summer day camp**, starts Tue., **May 30**. See ad on page 6.
- **Concerts in the park**, every Wed., starting **May 31 through Aug. 9**, 6:30 to 8:30 pm. See ad on page 18.
- **Color splash art show 2023**, Thu., **June 1** through Wed. **June 28**, Opening reception Fri., **June 2**, 6:30 pm. See ad on page 18.
- **MVEA Annual meeting of members**, Thu., **June 8**. See ad on page 12.
- **Jackson Creek Community garage sale**, Fri.-Sat., **June 16-17**.
- **Front Range Maker's Market**, Sat., **June 17**, 8:30am-3pm. See ad on page 2.

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Monument water storage tank excavation in Forest View Estates



Above: Excavation resumed during April to prepare for installation of a 2-million-gallon water storage tank for the town of Monument. The town acquired the site by eminent domain in 2016, although the location in Forest View Estates had recorded restrictive covenants stating the property and other lots within Forest View Estates were limited to residential use. The initial excavation began in the summer and fall of 2022. During the winter of 2022-23, work on the property was tabled while laying of pipeline started and is ongoing along residential roads in Forest View Estates, Red Rock Ranch, Highway 105, and residential streets in downtown Monument. *Photo by Sharon Williams.*

El Paso Board of County Commissioners, March 28, April 4 & 18 Overlook Estates rezone denied

By Helen Walklett

At the April 18 El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) land use meeting, the commissioners voted to deny a request to rezone to 2.5 acres a 5-acre property in the Overlook Estates neighborhood to the north of Old North Gate Road. At the same meeting, the commissioners heard a variance of use for a second dwelling at an RR-2.5 (rural residential) property in Black Forest. The BOCC also made decisions

relating to the Black Forest slash and mulch program and Monument Academy.

Overlook Estates rezone

The commissioners voted 4-1 to deny a request by Steven and Jennifer Liebowitz to rezone their property in Overlook Estates from RR-5 (rural residential) to RR-2.5. The rezone would have allowed them to apply to subdivide the existing lot into two 2.5-acre lots. The Summit

COUNTY (Cont. on 7)

Monument Fire District, April 26

Potential Gleneagle annexation ignites concern; Hayes recognized

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Monument Fire District (MFD) meeting on April 26, the board heard about the potential annexation of neighboring residents, recognized Director Terri Hayes for her years of service to the district, and approved an extension to the Meet and Confer plus agreement with L4319.

Secretary Mike Smaldino was excused.

Potential Annexation

Vice Chairman Roger Lance said he had read a message from Fire Chief

Andy Kovacs about Colorado Springs proposing the annexation of Gleneagle. That would have a serious impact on the fire district, he said.

Kovacs said a resident had made a comment about the potential annexation in early April. The comment gave him cause for concern after all the efforts the district had made to consolidate the two districts over the past 2 1/2 years. Annexation would require the dismantling of the consolidation of the two fire districts, the loss of Stations

MFD (Cont. on 11)

Monument Town Council, April Land use bill, investigation loom

By Chris Jeub

The Monument Town Council meetings in April discussed enterprise zones and town investments as well as the looming state Senate Bill 23-213 that would undermine Monument's permitting and zoning laws. But the majority of April was spent dealing with the independent investigation report presented Dec. 28, 2022, by the former Board of Trustees. Two executive meetings and two special meetings were called to specifically handle the investigation.

Actions include disavowing the results of the independent investigation, reinterpreting the results with a newly employed law firm, paying for the personal legal fees of the mayor, and addressing the CORA request from the previous mayor pro tem. The current board declared the investigation "over" with comments showing hope for the town to "move on."

Enterprise zones and town investments discussed

On April 3, Town Administrator Laura Hogan presented an opportunity to

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MONUMENT (Cont. from 1)


expand the enterprise zone in Monument. This zone is intended to provide tax credits to businesses, and one area in Monument has recently become

eligible. The proposed zone, located between Higby Road and Baptist Road on the east side of Interstate 25, aims to encourage businesses to come to Monument. El Paso County will bring the proposed zone to the state, and community members can help contribute to the development of businesses within the zone and receive tax benefits for doing so.

Council Member Jim Romanello asked for an explanation of the significance of the proposed zone. Hogan explained that it would be beneficial for the entire community. By encouraging businesses to come to Monument, the proposed enterprise zone could bring in new jobs and revenue for the town. Additionally, community members could contribute to the development of the businesses within the zone and receive tax benefits for doing so. Overall, the expansion of the enterprise zone presents an opportunity for growth and development for Monument and its residents.

The Council listened to three presentations discussing the investment of the town's money. The presentations were given by Katiana Siatras

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from Wells Fargo, Bob Krug from CSafe, and Max Mojab and Nate Eckloff from Piper Sadler & Co. The Council was interested in investing to make more money due to changing interest rates. There was a discussion of the risks associated with investing with banks, and securities were recommended as the most secure and liquid type of investment. Town Manager Mike Foreman is seeking direction to find the best proposal for the town.

Colorado Senate Bill 23-213
The Monument Council discussed state Senate Bill 23-213, which they claim would override the town's zoning and permit laws and transfer power to the state. All Council members stated that they believed this would be an overreach of state power

and could affect local issues such as housing, water, infrastructure, and police. Council Member Steve King expressed concern that the bill would benefit "millionaire owners" of multi-family housing units and could lead to the construction of rental buildings.

Mayor Mitch LaKind announced he would be forming a coalition of mayors in El

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Paso County to protest the bill. He stated, however, that “the Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce is in favor of it, which I find strange.” LaKind warned that he would not comply if the bill passes and that it will be difficult to get anything built for the state if the Pikes Peak Regional Building Department (PPRBD)

also refuses to comply. During public comment, residents expressed their opposition to the bill, and council members mentioned that Rep. Don Wilson and Rep. Paul Lundeen were also against it. President and CEO of the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce Terri Hayes expressed opposition to the bill but explained that the Colorado Springs Chamber sees it as a way to bring more people to town. “They see it as a way to solve their labor shortages,” she said. King read a letter written collectively by the Town Council to oppose Senate Bill 23-213. They argued that

the bill would eliminate their ability to zone multi-family housing to locations where the infrastructure is in place, remove their discretion to place certain criteria on multi-family housing, allow the character of neighborhoods to be destroyed by forcing incompatible land uses directly adjacent to single-family homes, mandate expensive studies relative to housing and water resources, and shift the burden and responsibility of what have traditionally been local decisions up to “a state agency.” The letter claimed the bill reflects the state’s belief that “it knows far more about what’s best for the quality of life in their communities than their own citizens do,” and they urged legislators to reject the bill. The Town Council is also working on a plan to mitigate the impact of the bill if it is passed. After La-Kind pledged to not comply, King added, “We will do everything we can to make sure that this bill does not have a negative impact on Monument.” See letter “Monument Town Council opposes bill” in Letters to the Editor on page 24.

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**Investigation declared over,
CORA request suggests otherwise**

Two executive sessions and two special meetings were called to address the investigation report of Dec. 28, 2022. See January's OCN article for complete reporting of the December special meetings leading up to the investigation findings and recommendations to the Town Council.

Background: The previous Board of Trustees launched the investigation late in the 2022 election cycle that accused the Home Rule Charter Commission of electioneering and fraud. The investigation called for publicly censuring much of the newly elected Council (King, Abbott, Kronick, LaKind), the termination of the town manager and other employees, and filing ethics complaints against the previous town attorney. None of the recommendations has been adopted by the new Council.

April 3: Monument pays for LaKind's personal attorney: The Town Council broke to executive session to seek guidance from Town Attorney Bob Cole on specific legal questions relating to the report of the investigation findings. Following the session, most members of the public left and three people remained online. An action item was taken to instruct

the town manager to pay Mayor LaKind's personal attorney fees that incurred during December's investigation. The action item read: "Sherman & Howard Invoice No. 862015 to Mitchell LaKind for Professional Services, 12/22/22 through 1/31/23." The item passed 6-0 with LaKind—since it benefited him financially—recusing himself from the vote. The council did not disclose the amount of the fees.

Council Member Laura Kronick noted that every-

one had to sit through what she called "a debacle" at the end of last year. Kronick referenced "one person" [LaKind] who "stood up and did the right thing." King added that the town was left without an attorney at the time, and LaKind had taken it upon himself to "handle the situation." Council Member Jim Romanello put forth the motion. The meeting adjourned without public comment.



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April 11: Investigation disavowed and declared over: The first of two special meetings was called on April 11 to bring the investigation findings to a close with proposed resolutions 26, 27, and 28. The investigation itself was not discussed outside of executive session, but the resolutions all passed unanimously. Kronick, LaKind, and Council Member Ab-

bott recused themselves for some of the votes. The resolutions disavowed the investigation, authorized “actions” toward the appointed independent investigator Grant Van Der Jagt, and authorized payment to another law firm, Sherman & Howard. Public comment came from two members of the public who expressed support for the Council’s decisions, and one asking for information on the reports.

Though the Council disavowed the investigation, LaKind expressed how he, as a mayoral candidate at the time, promised to continue the investigation “wherever it led.” LaKind admitted the investigation “took longer than expected and cost taxpayers a lot of money,” but insisted it was done thoroughly. He then said he hopes “the town can heal and move forward” now that the investigation is over. He also mentioned that mistakes were made, but they were not intentional, and a process is now in place to remedy them. **April 17: Former Mayor Pro Tem Elliott questions town endorsements:** Former Mayor Pro Tem Kelly Elliott raised concerns during public comment. She brought up a mailer from the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce, which included a letter from Mayor LaKind welcoming new residents to the area that she claimed promoted businesses in Denver and Colorado Springs, not Monument. LaKind responded by

stating that he did not know his name was going out beyond the scope of Monument. Elliott then brought up a \$1,500 purchase by LaKind at the Tri-Lakes Chamber Annual Dinner for a suite at a Sky Sox game, and asked whether it was a town budgeted item or a personal item. LaKind refused to answer, saying that he would not respond to questions about his personal finances.

Hayes added to the public comment by clarifying that the mailer was sent out by a privately owned welcome wagon company and had nothing to do with the Town of Monument. LaKind requested that his name not be sent out in any future mailers promoting businesses outside of Monument and stated that he would not have added his name to the mailer if he had known it was being used to promote businesses in Denver and Colorado Springs.

April 26: Invoice of legal fees delivered to former mayor pro tem: A special town meeting was held April 26 to discuss a CORA request (a formal request to public records under the Colorado Open Records Act) asking for the receipt for the attorney fees paid to LaKind’s personal attorney. Town lawyer Bob Cole disclosed a conflict of interest by LaKind for two agenda items that dealt with the request. The Council voted 5-0 to accept the disclosure and exempt LaKind from the meeting. The Council also voted to rescind attorney client privilege and avoid an executive session “to allow complete transparency,” as stated by King.

Kronick read a statement expressing that the Council should vote to give Kelly Elliott, the former mayor pro tem who made the request, the invoice she requested. Kronick claimed the invoice “proves no taxpayers’ dollars were spent to personally aid Mayor LaKind” and that she “hope[s] that Kelly Elliott ceases her attacks on the Town and the associated tens of thousands of taxpayers’ dollars spent each time another failed attempt is made to justify the pursuit of a \$2,500 honest mistake that was legally cured prior to her initial call for an investigation that began last year.” She ended her statement with the hope that this will “end this chapter in Monument’s history.”

The Council voted unanimously to grant the request (Council Member Marco Fiorito was absent) before the meeting adjourned. Foreman published a press release which claimed to justify the invoice of April 3. “The Town Council considered the Interim Town Attorney’s opinion that legal services described

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in the invoice related to providing for the interests of the Town of Monument and therefore it is both legal and appropriate for the Town to pay the invoice.”

The Monument Council 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, May 1 and Monday, May 15. Call 719-884-8014 or see www.townof-monument.org for information. To see upcoming agendas and complete board packets or to download audio

recordings of past meetings, see <http://monumenttownco.minuteson-demand.com> and click on Town Council. Chris Jeub can be reached at chrisjeub@ocn.me.

BOCC (Cont. from 1)

Drive property is north of Old North Gate Road, west of Silverton Road and just north of the Flying Horse development and the Colorado Springs city limits.

Lekishia Bellamy, planner I, Planning and Community Development Department, told the commissioners that the El Paso County Planning Commission had voted 7-2 to recommend the application be denied at its March 16 meeting. She said the denial was based on a perception that the rezone was incompatible with the surrounding RR-5 properties, that it was spot zoning, and amid concerns that the RR-5 zoning district was under attack. See www.ocn.me/v23n4.htm#epcpc.

Bellamy told the commissioners that 20 adjacent property owners had been notified and the county had received 154 responses, two of which were in favor. She said concerns raised by the community centered on it establishing an unwanted precedent, traffic congestion, decreased home values, incompatibility with the surrounding area, and water availability.

The applicant was represented by Craig Dossey, president, Vertex Consulting Services, and formerly executive director, Planning and Community Development, who said the area was identified as one of minimal change in the county master plan and commented that he could not think of anything more minimal than splitting five acres into two, stating, “that’s about as minimal as you can get and affect change on this property.” As part of the application, the commissioners had to decide if there had been substantial change in the area since the last zoning change. Dossey argued that this was the case, most notably with the nearby Flying Horse development. He said objections had come from people more than a mile away and yet there was so much smaller development closer to the property.

Dossey stated that “hidden” change had already happened in the neighborhood in the form of accessory dwelling units, with 12 within a third of a mile of the city boundary. He commented, “There is already a density transition that has been forming.” Pointing out the ridgeline to the north

of the applicant’s property, Dossey said this topography created a density transition boundary and that none of the homes was visible from the other side of the ridge.

Neighbor Greg Wolff, a realtor who had spoken in favor of the application at the Planning Commission hearing, did so again, saying, “I support the project. I believe in personal property rights.”

Fourteen people spoke in opposition, raising concerns that the rezone was spot zoning and would set a precedent if approved, highlighting water availability issues, increased traffic, light pollution, fire risk, and incompat-

ibility with the surrounding area. Jerry McLaughlin, a resident and president of the Sun Hills Homeowners’ Association, challenged the accessory dwelling unit justification for the rezoning, saying second home approvals are not zoning changes but are accomplished via special use permits and are well-established and compatible with the current zoning. Another neighbor told the commissioners that the Liebowitzes were asking them to change their property rights and that those objecting were asking them to defend theirs.

In rebuttal, Dossey said that the rezoning would not affect the neighbors’ 5-acre zoning, commenting, “They’re



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over the hill. As far as I'm concerned, they're a completely different neighborhood." He argued the rezoning would not affect their property rights as they would have "the same uses under the RR-5 today that they'll have tomorrow, that they'll have 10 years from now unless they rezone their property." Dossey had earlier highlighted the allowed uses under the RR-5 zoning that

the Liebowitzes would be giving up by rezoning, many of which he said would generate more traffic, noise, water use, etc. than one additional single-family lot. He questioned how the proposal could be called spot zoning when the county's master plan allowed for 2.5-acre lots with this placetype and remarked that Overlook Estates' covenants allowed for 1-acre lots.

Applicant Jennifer Liebowitz said to date they had spent \$25,000 on the application but had taken that risk because they were told by planners during the process that they were in accordance with everything that was required. She said that after the Planning Commission decision, they were told they had not shown substantial change in the area. Liebowitz said, "I really have to question that. We have the entire Flying Horse development that I look at every single day from my back deck. We have a school of 3,000 people that come and go every single day along with the traffic from Sun Hills coming past our property." She commented, "That is substantial change to me."

Steve Liebowitz told the commissioners that they had had three different project managers at the county during the application process and had gotten the water decree first after being advised that water would be the biggest challenge. He said they were led to believe that it was an objective process and were repeatedly reassured that there was nothing to worry about. Bellamy, their third project manager, said there were no issues and concerns but that there was some limited opposition.

Steve Liebowitz said that when the Planning Commission began to

hear public input, they repeatedly allowed issues that were not related to the review criteria such as precedence, land values, and water. He said it became obvious that several of the commissioners were preconvinced to rule against our request. He stated, "We were positive and optimistic that the process would be objective and fair. Since the Planning Commission meeting, we've been in total shock that the commissioners didn't follow their own master plan but listened to the misinformation campaign orchestrated by the Sun Hills Homeowners' Association." He added that he had received a phone call from Bellamy the day before the BOCC hearing and that during that conversation Bellamy related that we (I'm assuming she meant her department) were shocked that the Planning Commission had denied the rezone request, especially since we had met all the review criteria. Bellamy then stated she hoped the county commissioners would approve our request at today's meeting.

Commissioner Holly Williams commented, "I think that this application doesn't meet the criteria and I say that because I don't consider the substantial change in Flying Horse to be something that was under our control."

Geitner said, "I do believe this is in compliance with our master plan because it specifically says 2.5-acre lots are in that large lot residential, so I do disagree. It's in conformance with our master plan." She added that while she agreed the county did not make the changes at Flying Horse, the question was "had it changed?"

Commissioner Longinos Gonzalez Jr. said, "In this case all the changes that were noted were accessory dwelling



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units, not a splitting of zones. That's why I think it's not compatible." Commissioner Stan VanderWerf said he was concerned that a precedent could be set which would really cause a problem.

The vote to deny was 4-1 with Geitner the no vote.

Black Forest second dwelling variance approved

Also at the April 18 land use meeting, the commissioners approved a variance of use to allow a second dwelling at a 2.89-acre property zoned RR 2.5 on the southwest corner of the intersection of Ford Drive and Milam Road in Black Forest. The application came to the BOCC with a recommendation for approval from the Planning Commission. See www.ocn.me/v23n4.htm#epcpc.

Commissioner Geitner made the meeting aware that the applicants were family friends but said she felt she could be fair and impartial in the decision-making process.

The county approved a site plan for a new single-family dwelling in August 2022 and, at that time, the original 1960s dwelling was converted to an accessory living quarters. Such quarters can only be used for occasional temporary stays by family and friends. Christian Haas, planner I, Planning and Community Development, explained that a secondary dwelling was a more intense use which can be permanently occupied and rented out.

Nina Ruiz of Vertex Consulting Services and representing the client said the possibility of a variance of use option was not discussed at the time of the initial application. County staff would only have explained it if the applicant had said that was what they wanted to do. She said, "It wasn't Mr. Patterson [the applicant] trying to be sneaky or trying to do anything out of order. He just simply didn't know that that was an option."

No one spoke in support. Terry Stokka, chairman, Black Forest Land Use Committee, said that while the committee was not opposed to accessory dwelling units or guest houses, it did oppose a permanent dwelling. He said, "Approv-

ing two dwelling units on this acreage which is only 2.89 acres is a violation of the land development code and the county master plan. It effectively creates a subdivision." He said it created a dangerous precedent.

Ruiz stated there were five properties within half a mile with two dwelling units, so the precedent was already set.

Gonzalez said that if the application had been the first one, he would be more inclined to disapprove but there were already others utilizing the same variance. Holly Williams agreed. The vote to approve was unanimous.

Monument Academy minor subdivision

At the April 4 BOCC land use meeting, the commissioners approved a request by Land Resource Associates for approval of a minor subdivision to create one lot and four tracts on the almost 63-acre site of the new Monument Academy. It is located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Walker Road and Highway 83.

The 19.38-acre lot will contain the high school, recreational fields, and parking. Two of the tracts are set aside for future development, and two will be transferred to adjoining property owners as part of a property line survey adjustment.

Black Forest slash and mulch program

At its March 28 meeting, the BOCC approved the 2023 memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Black Forest Slash and Mulch Committee (SAMCOM), the nonprofit responsible for the program's daily operation.

This wildfire mitigation program, staffed entirely by volunteers, accepts slash (tree debris including branches, leaves, needles, etc.) from residents that is ground into mulch, which is available free of charge to the public.

Under the MOU, the county contributes up to \$40,000 toward grinder expenses, and SAMCOM provides \$12,000 toward the costs.

The site, at the southeast corner of Shoup and Herring Roads, opened for the 2023 season for slash drop-off on April 29. Normal business

hours will be Saturdays 7 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sundays noon-4 p.m., and Tuesday and Thursday evenings 5-7:30 p.m. The last date for slash drop-off is Sept. 10. There is a \$2 drop-off fee for slash with a loyalty card available that offers a discount.

Free mulch will be available for self-loading from May 20 through Sept. 16. For large quantities of mulch, an end loader will be available on Saturdays only, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., charging \$5 per bucket.

For more information, visit www.bfslash.org. Anyone wanting to volunteer to work a shift can do so via the website.

The Pineries mountain beetle infestation

At the April 18 BOCC meeting, Judy von Ahlefeldt, a longtime

resident of Black Forest, again spoke about a mountain pine beetle infestation in trees at The Pineries Open Space in Black Forest which has spread to private property. Von Ahlefeldt first brought the mat-

ter to the BOCC's attention in early 2022 when she raised concerns about the method by which it was being treated. At the time, the county had signed a contract for \$42,600 to have the affected trees

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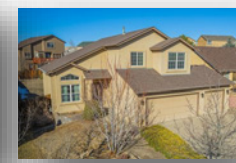
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masticated. See <https://www.ocn.me/v22n4.htm#epbocc>.
Describing the infestation as a very serious threat to Black Forest, von Ahlefeldt said the 2022 mastication was ineffective. She said she had been try-

ing to work with the county parks department on the matter for 14 months without any success.
She called for county forestry staff to speak with the state forestry service and said that they needed to get as

many of the infected trees out as possible but that there was currently no program to do that.
The Pineries Open Space is on Volmer Road north of the intersection of Volmer and Shoup Roads in an area

of Black Forest extremely damaged by the 2013 fire. It totals 1,070 acres and opened to the public in June 2020.
Helen Walklett can be reached at helenwalklett@ocn.me.



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El Paso County Planning Commission, April 20 Plans for three commercial multi-tenant buildings recommended for approval

By Helen Walklett

At the April 20 El Paso County Planning Commission meeting, the commissioners heard a request for approval of a preliminary plan for a proposed development called Cathedral Rock Commons Commercial to create commercial lots on property directly south of the Big R store off Struthers Road in Monument.

Cathedral Rock Commons Commercial

The commissioners voted unanimously to recommend for approval a site plan request by Store Master Funding VIII LLC, the owners of the Big R Store, to create three commercial lots and a tract on the 10.25-acre property at the northeast corner of Struthers Road and Spanish Bit Drive. The land is zoned commercial community.

The existing Big R would be on the 6.2-acre lot 1. Lots 2 and 3 would each be less than 2 acres and would have three commercial multi-tenant

retail buildings on them, connected via a shared driveway to the Big R store to the north. The tract would contain the existing detention area. The applicant anticipates that the proposed buildings would include businesses that cater to the rural aesthetic that supports the Big R store. The first proposed building to the east would potentially have three retail tenants as would the middle building, which would also have a drive-through. The third building on the west side of the drive is intended to house a possible wheat grass business and restaurant. The site plan includes a proposal for 117 parking spaces and some motorcycle parking.

The application was heard as a consent item, meaning there was no discussion. It is now due to be heard at the El Paso Board of County Commissioners land use meeting on May 16.

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

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MFD
(cont. from page 1)

4 and 5, and revenue loss. The City of Colorado Springs has been discussing annexation possibilities for a few years, and a map exists showing potential annexation opportunities that include Gleneagle to Hodgen Road and Highway 83, areas that are in unincorporated Colorado Springs.

Meetings with Monument Mayor Mitch LaKind, town manager Mike Foreman, Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) board President Mark Gunderman, and some Gleneagle residents had taken place to discuss a vote allowing the residents to annex into the Town of Monument. Town Hall meetings with the residents are planned for summer 2023 to discuss the benefits of annexing into Monument, he said.

Director recognition

Lance thanked Director Terri Hayes for her contribution to the fire district during her tenure on the Board of Directors.

Kovacs thanked Hayes for providing a unique perspective during the board meetings since 2016. Hayes will be deeply missed by the district, he said. See caption.

President John Hildebrandt (attending via phone) said Hayes had been a wonderful voice for the citizens of the district and brought a lot to the board, and he appreciated her service over the years.

Note: Hayes will be succeeded by Randall B. Estes at the May board meeting.

Meet and Confer plus agreement extension

Kovacs said the district is still working through a revised Meet and Confer plus agreement with the International Association of Firefighters Local 4319, but due to time constraints a second extension to the existing agreement was needed for another month.

The board approved the second extension to the agreement, 6-0.

Financial report

Treasurer Tom Kelly presented the financial report for March and said:

- The district had received about \$4.7 million in property taxes year to date.
- Overall revenue received year to date was about \$6.2 million.
- The projected annual income is expected to be about \$16.5 million.
- Overall expenses year to date was about \$3.9 million.
- The projected annual expenses are expected to be about \$14 million.
- General liability insurance is expected to increase with the added employees and equipment.

Lance noted the district had spent another \$6,000 on snow removal for March and asked if a decision had been made to find another contractor.

Kovacs said the district had received three responses out of the 20 mailed requests but ultimately decided to keep the contract with Greater Grounds due to the distance of one contractor and the other would not provide any liability. The board approved a snowplow at its March board meeting and hopes that next year the snow removal costs will be lower, he said. See www.ocn.me/v23n4.htm#mfd.

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

Chief's report

Kovacs said the following:

- The lease-purchase agreements for two new fire engines had been paid off for a total of about \$825,000.



Above: From left, Fire Chief Andy Kovacs presents board Director Terri Hayes with an acrylic plaque recognizing dedicated service since 2016 to Monument Fire District. *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*

- He had the opportunity to attend the district's annual live fire training at BFFRPD for all three days. The firefighters all did an outstanding job.
- The district completed 639 training hours in March.
- The district is now averaging a manageable number of requests from American Medical Response (AMR) and accepted three out of five calls for assistance from AMR in March.
- A retirement ceremony for Battalion Chief Mike Keough is scheduled at Station 1 on May 13 at 8 a.m.

Note: For more information, see DW-

FPD article on page 12 and the Station 4 "push-in" ceremony in snapshots on page 27.

Recruitment efforts continue

Division Chief of Operations Jonathan Bradley said he and Battalion Chief Micah Coyle had participated in a student job fair in Greeley. About 100 fire science students were in attendance, but about 30 fire departments and some private ambulance organizations were also looking for recruits. The district's application pool is about 50% below previous years. Former colleagues from the mountain fire departments are having greater difficulty recruiting, with staff commuting 100 miles west from Denver to those stations, he said.

Hayes suggested the district recruiting staff try attending local recruiting events.

Kovacs said departments are offering signing and moving bonuses to recruit staff.

First Due software

Battalion Chief Scott Ridings presented First Due software, a system that will tie into the Computer Aided Dispatch system. The software is designed to store important information that can be retained for future calls to aid firefighters before they reach an incident. The residents and business owners will be able



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to input information such as special medical equipment and pets on the premises. Participants will be required to confirm and update information annually, and will be prompted for a couple of months before data is deleted.

Kovacs said staff will begin collecting information from about 650 businesses in the district. Details will include information such as occupancy, building height, type of store, square footage, special hazards, and stairwells. The information will be loaded into the system by the district staff, identifying the higher-risk buildings first.

Ridings said First Due will tie into the accreditation process. Lance said

the software will push the district further toward achieving higher accreditation.

Kovacs said the district will notify the residents and business owners at the end of May with a district-wide mailer, with some print advertising and social media links to encourage participation.

Zonehaven

Kovacs said Zonehaven software was adopted and purchased by the El Paso County Sheriff's Office for every agency in the county. Zonehaven is designed to assist with evacuations and lockdown situations, and will tie into the

district wildland pre-plans. Residents do need to sign up individually for Peak Alerts to receive notifications, he said. To sign up for Peak Alerts, visit www.monumentfire.org.

Emergency Incident Support

Emergency Incident Support (EIS) board President Gary Nelson thanked Kovacs for a recent invitation to support a mass casualty incident event in June. Without the monetary support from Tri-Lakes Women's Club, Pikes Peak Club, and more recently Monument Hill Foundation, EIS would not be in a position to provide those services to first responders. EIS is proud

to support the event, he said. For more information, visit www.epceis.com.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday of every month at Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for May 24 at 6:30 p.m. Meeting attendance is open to the public in person or via Zoom. For joining instructions, agendas, minutes, and updates, visit www.monumentfire.org or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

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

Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, April 26

Northern subdistrict dissolution plan underway; 2022 supplemental budget approved

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) "special meeting" on April 26, the board met to sign an intergovernmental agreement for the northern subdistrict to continue receiving emergency services from Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District dba Monument Fire District (MFD) and to approve the start of the subdistrict dissolution process and a supplement to the 2022 budget.

Northern subdistrict dissolution process

Emily Powell of Ireland Stapleton Pryor Pascoe PC law firm, the district's attorney, said her firm was getting ready to file the order for the subdistrict dissolution with the court on May 1. To file the

order with the district court, the district has to show the dissolution is in the best interests of the district and show what will happen to the employees, infrastructure, and debt, she said. The document is short because of the actions that have already taken place with MFD. Service will continue to be provided by MFD under the contract that is already in place. Powell requested the board approve and sign two documents for the district and the northern subdistrict, and provide a copy of the district financial report from March, she said.

Powell requested the board approve and sign the intergovernmental agreement for the continuation of emergency services with the district and the northern subdistrict, sign the

resolution for the dissolution of the DWFPD northern subdistrict, and set forth a plan of dissolution.

President Mark Gunderman asked if the document will set the stage for the election in November.

Powell said the documents will set the stage for a court action, to petition for dissolution and order an election, and the court will be informed that the subdistrict has decided it is in its best interest to be dissolved, but only if the district (south Voyager Parkway) has an election to increase the mill levy at the same time, and it passes. See www.ocn.me/v23n2.htm#dwfpd. The court will be told the district passed a resolution for plan of dissolution and a plan to continue emergency services. The court can order an election if a designated election official is named. She suggested Fire Chief Andy Kovacs be the designated official with Director of Administration Jennifer Martin named

as a backup to avoid going back to the court should Kovacs be unable to officiate. After the court orders the election, the district can proceed as it would with a regular election, Powell said.

The board unanimously approved the resolution.

2022 supplemental budget amendment

Fire Chief Andy Kovacs said former interim Fire Chief Warren Jones had requested equalization pay in December 2021 to allow the salaries of the DWFPD personnel during the consolidation of the two departments to match the MFD salaries in 2022. Jones identified cost savings of \$237,418 to allow for the equalization pay of \$236,463, however the 2022 budget had already been approved and adopted, and the dollar amount to pay for the fire services that MFD would begin providing in 2022 had not been determined in the original 2022 budget. Fast forward



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to December 2022, and Stacey Popovich, DWFPD administrative assistant, left at short notice for another fire department. The district was left scrambling to become educated about the Wescott budget, and at the Jan. 25 board meeting, the board approved the DWFPD finances be handled by The Accounting Office Inc. for \$450 per month. See www.ocn.me/v23n2.htm#dwfpd.

Kovacs requested the board approve the 2022 supplemental amendments totaling about \$1.67 million (includes \$71,010 for compatible Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) for the DWFPD staff, \$12,854 for FPPA (pension), \$128,554 for salaries, \$25,000 for part-time salaries, and about \$1.43 million for the contract with MFD). Kovacs said although a grant was pursued for SCBA, it was unavailable. See www.ocn.me/v22n1.htm#dwfpd.

Gunderman opened the public hearing on the 2022 supplemental budgets for DWFPD and northern sub-district.

Powell said the notice of the public hearing was duly published by law and the district did not receive any comments before the hearing.

An unidentified resident asked if the amendment included \$1 million plus the extra \$1 million in reserves.

Kovacs said the 2022 budget was under by about \$1

million, meaning it was not expended in 2022, plus additional reserves were left in the budget before 2022, he said.

The board closed the public hearing and unanimously approved the 2022 supplemental budget for the DWFPD and the northern subdistrict.

Board receives thanks
Director Mike Forsythe

thanked the board on behalf of the combined district staff for the funding to purchase a dedication plaque to memorialize and honor Firefighter/Paramedic Doug McIntyre. Forsythe said Lieutenants Roger Lance and Kurt Leonberger were putting together something special. See www.ocn.me/v23n4.htm#dwfpd.

Note: For additional information, see the MFD article on page 1.

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Meetings are usually held every other month on the fourth Wednesday at Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. The next regular board meeting is scheduled

for May 24 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.monumentfire.org or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

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



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Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District, April 19

Board approves wage compensation schedule; wildland technicians hired

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD) meeting on April 19, the board held an executive session to discuss a wage compensation schedule and heard about the recently hired five seasonal wildland technicians and the ongoing preparations to combat wildland fires.

Executive session

The board moved into an executive session at 7:50 p.m., pursuant to Colorado Revised Statute 24-6-402 (3.a.V.), to discuss compensation matters that may be subject to negotiations with employees or employee organizations.

When the board returned to the regular meeting at 8:21 p.m., board Chairman Nate Dowden said a revised 2023 wage schedule had been proposed and presented to the board implementing some modifications for certain positions. He made a motion to adopt the wage increase proposal effective April 17, to align with the next pay period.

The board unanimously approved the new schedule.

Note: After the meeting, Fire Chief PJ Langmaid confirmed the wage increases were primarily to adjust the compensation for the paramedics and the public relations director. Salary increases were also applied to the following positions: fire chief, deputy chief operations, administrative officer, and Firefighter/EMT Class 3 and 4 positions.

Resident Linda Smith asked if the deputy chief of logistics position would be filled.

Langmaid said the position would not be filled. The executive team will fulfill the role and provide additional opportunities for personnel development internally.

Wildland fire preparedness

Deputy Chief of Operations Chris Piepenburg said the district hired five new wildland technicians about a month ago. The wildland technicians are covering three shifts and work 24 hours on, with three days off, but all the new hire technicians were off shift for the mutual aid calls the district had recently received. The technicians will perform the risk assessments and mitigation efforts, change the fire danger signs, and operate the tenders for the district, he said.

Langmaid said the wildland technicians are working a 42-hour week and are paid with wildland deployment revenue.

Note: Rapid Wildfire Risk assessments continue on each property to help assess the wildfire hazard and mitigation needs within the district. Each property owner will be provided with a score card. To request a more detailed Firewise property assessment with helpful suggestions on how to make your property defensible and survivable, contact 719-495-4300 or email admin@bffire.org with your address and contact information. Additional details can be found at bffire.org.

Wildland fuel testing

Piepenburg said the district received a laboratory oven and supplies to conduct wildland fuels testing. The oven tests vegetation samples for moisture from three locations around the district every two weeks, but recent precipitation had prevented testing. The oven provides a moisture percentage to accurately predict the combustibility of fuels within the district, he said.

Langmaid said only two entities were testing for fuel

safety within the county, and the district is happy to be the third entity testing.

Black Forest Fire lessons learned

Smith asked if any of the current staff had served the department during the 2013 Black Forest Fire, and if the fire could have been averted had the district had the current department.

Langmaid said he was unsure, but he and board members lost property and maybe one or two returning firefighters were around during the fire. Hypotheticals are always a challenge for firefighters, but based on lessons learned, under similar circumstances, the decentralized command model the district has in place will allow the shift commanders to make aggressive decisions without compromising safety, he said.

Piepenburg said that every staff member is well versed about the Black Forest Fire, and they know the story very well. It is the role of each staff member to do their very best to ensure it does not happen again. The district also maintains a nationwide wildland fire deployment program to allow staff to gain first-hand experience in operating under austere conditions, he said.

Smith said she feels more protected and safer with the new organization, the additional staffing, and all the training that takes place.

Dowden said hopefully any organization learns from the past, and thankfully the department has changed and improved after such a major impetus. Kudos to the team for moving the district forward, he said.

Community club requests assistance

Three members of the Black Forest Community Club 10th Anniversary of the Black Forest Fire Remembrance Committee requested department assistance in the form of a ladder

truck to raise a flag, a Firewise booth to help educate the community, and participation in the form of a speech during the event on June 10.

Langmaid said that all decisions should be made by the committee, but the district staff were happy to help wherever possible. District Public Information Director Brooke Reid would assist with making connections. Langmaid suggested the committee contact the El Paso County Sheriff's Office for traffic control, and he would ask retired Deputy Chief James Rebitski if he could give a speech during the event, but the 2023 budget did not include any funding for the event, he said.

Facilities update

Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn said the district is still waiting for an inspection before the gas meter can be installed in the barn.

Dowden asked why the inspection had been lagging for so long.

Dunn said the 20-year-old building plans had to be tracked down before an inspection could take place, but the vendor now has the plans. See www.ocn.me/v23n2.htm#bffirpd.

Piepenburg said the following:

- The district staff are "crushing it" and had performed about 1,718 training hours in March.
- Live Fire Training was taking place throughout the week with Monument Fire District scheduled to join in at the end of the week.
- Staff continue to work on state certifications.
- All staff completed a Wildland Refresher course and a Pack Test.
- The recently hired staff completed a week of Wildland Training and Sawyer training.
- The district assisted Falcon Fire Protection District with a structure fire

and helped during the 125 Fire near Simla, in Elbert County, on March 30. Langmaid said the following:

- The remodel of the Station 1 community room has been paused to allow the community to use the room.
- The 2005 Pierce mid-mount aerial ladder truck is close to being transported and delivered, but nothing had been confirmed.

Note: The district received the apparatus on April 26. See www.ocn.me/v22n12.htm#bffirpd.

Extreme ownership

Director Chad Behnken thanked Langmaid for the invitation to attend the Echelon Muster Extreme Ownership Conference in Orlando, Fla., with Langmaid and three of the district lieutenants. Behnken said speakers at the two-day leadership conference presented the lessons they learned during wartime deployments and how those same lessons can apply to everyday situations. The conference teaches extreme ownership of tasks within organizations without looking to the top leadership to blame for missions that fail, how to empower staff, and to prioritize and create a strong organization, said Behnken.

The meeting adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Meetings are usually held on the third Wednesday of the month at Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. Meetings are open to the public in person or via Zoom. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 17 at 7 p.m. For joining instructions, updates, agendas, minutes, and reports, visit www.bffire.org or contact Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn at admin@bffire.org or call 719-495-4300.

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

Lewis-Palmer D38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee, April 11

Bear Creek Elementary, Portrait of a Graduate and Educator, wellness policy discussed

By Harriet Halbig

The Lewis-Palmer D38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee (formerly District Accountability Advisory Committee) discussed a number of subjects at its final meeting of the school year on April 11.

Bear Creek Elementary presentation

Bear Creek Elementary (BCES) Principal Peggy Parsley, who will retire at the end of the school year, offered a presentation about her school

with the aid of several staff members.

The population of Bear Creek is 875 students, one of the largest elementary schools in the state. The school was opened in 2001 as Creekside Middle School and later became Bear Creek when the student population of Grace Best Elementary was transferred to the site. Seventh- and eighth-graders were then transferred to Lewis-Palmer Middle School.

The school serves grades K through 6 and is a Title 1 school along with Palmer Lake Elementary. This reflects the number of students who are eligible for free/reduced lunches or are otherwise considered at risk.

The vision for BCES includes building character, educating students, and a dedication to shared leadership, Parsley said. Students and staff

D38 (Cont. on 16)

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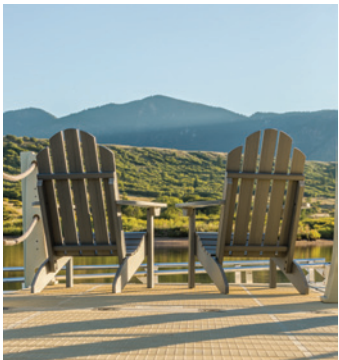


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D38 (Cont. from 14)

are encouraged to envision what they would like a sixth-grader to be like when they leave BCES to advance to middle school.

BCES offers culturally diverse and responsive instruction, depth and complexity in the curriculum, and a literary emphasis, she said.

The diversity aspect is reflected in the selection in the library, Parsley said. Use of the responsive classroom model encourages connections between students, families, and teachers.

Emphasis is placed on reading and writing at all grade levels.

Regarding extracurricular activities, BCES offers before- and after-school activities including a STEAM night (science, technology, engineering, and math), science fair, art show, chess club, K Kids (in cooperation with Monument Hill Kiwanis), and robotics.

A new program this year is All Bear Creek Reads.

At the end of the presentation, Parsley introduced her successor, Donnel Potter.

Portrait of a Graduate and Portrait of an Educator update

Secondary Program Coordinator Jess McAllister reported on progress in developing the District 38 Portrait of a Graduate and Portrait of an Educator.

This program, begun early last year, describes the cognitive and personal attributes desired to ensure success beyond high school graduation on the basis of input from students, staff, community, and parents. To read a detailed description of the program, please refer to the Board of Education article at <https://ocn.me/v23n4.htm#d38>.

Wellness Committee report and wellness policy update

The district wellness team is required by the National School Lunch Program to review its policy and practices every three years.

There are several changes to the policy this year, including the addition of nutrition education to the

curriculum, updating nutrition standards, offering physical education and other activity at all grade levels, and promoting overall wellness.

Grades K through 6 are participating in the National School Lunch Program. The policy requires that the district will comply with state and federal statutes regarding meals, competitive food services, Smart Snacks in Schools, and nutrition education. All students will have a lunch period of no less than 20 minutes.

The committee assessed current policy JLJ regarding physical education and activity. Adaptive physical education was not included, because it is part of the formal curriculum.

The updated policy will be presented to the Board of Education for approval in June.

Budget update

Chief Business Officer Brett Ridgway offered an update on the proposed 2023-24 district budget.

He said that the district processes about \$80 million per year. There are 936 employees including 408 teachers, 371 support staff, 19 school administrators, 15 professional and technical employees, and 14 district administrators.

The district's funds are in 19 bank accounts at seven institutions. The district is restricted by state law as to where it invests its funds.

The process by which the budget is determined is to establish a philosophy to connect projected changes in School Finance Act revenue to changes in General Fund expenditures.

Ridgway solicited opinions from the staff through the Staff Collaboration Committee (SCC), especially regarding compensation.

Ridgway said that he seeks to avoid fearful budgeting, because too conservative an approach can be harmful. The goal is for the budget to be "98% to 100.5% accurate," he said.

The drivers of the budget include School Finance Act income, which is anticipated to increase by 8% to \$9,800 per full-time equivalent; estimated student

count for the coming year; restoring funding for capital maintenance to pre-pandemic levels; and taking advantage of increased interest income on district investments, Ridgway said.

The amount of revenue from the School Finance Act will not be finalized until May.

Ridgway reported that, following input from the SCC, the budget will reflect increased revenue due to efficiencies, offering Health Savings Accounts in addition to other health benefits, offering an anniversary bonus every five years, and enhancing rewards for years of experience at the time of hiring.

For additional detailed information about the budget, see <https://ocn.me/v23n4.htm#d38> or go to the district website, lewispalmer.org, Family Resources, District Accountability Advisory Committee, and the meeting date, April 11, to view the PowerPoint.

Board of Education update

Board liaison Tiffiney Upchurch reported that the board will offer Engage and Elevate events again this year to encourage community members to speak with the board about their concerns.

This year the events are taking place in coffee shops throughout the district. The final event will be on May 16 at 1 p.m. at Bennie's, located in the YMCA building on Jackson Creek Parkway.

Upchurch also reported that this year's legislative session will end soon. She encouraged individuals to access to Colorado Association of School Boards website to track the progress of bills through the Legislature. Please go to casb.org/2023legislative-bills.

Upchurch also introduced Kris Norris, newly appointed member of the Board of Education from District 1.

The D38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee meets six times per year. Locations vary. This was the final meeting of the 2022-23 school year.

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

Monument Academy School Board, April 13

MA selects board members, makes progress on finances

By Jackie Burhans

At its April 13 regular meeting, the Monument Academy board selected the sole two candidates as board members, heard positive updates from its interim finance director, and discussed how to handle snow days for the remainder of the school year. The board also heard committee updates.

Board members selected

Vice President Lindsay Clinton had announced in January that two board seat terms were ending on June 30—that of Graham and of Michael Geers, who had been appointed to fill a vacancy. She said there were only two applicants for the seats—Graham and Michael Ross, so there was no need to proceed to an election. She gave the two candidates a chance to speak.

Ross said he had three children at MA and a 2-year-old at home. He said his family loves MA and is committed to their children's education. He lives in Palmer Lake, runs a small business, and is deeply in-

vested in the community and the next generation. He is an executive pastor at Pikes Peak Christian Church in Colorado Springs in Security-Widefield, where he deals with staff and budget issues. He said he has been in the ministry for 21 years, and his experience is very applicable to what the school board needs. He holds conservative Christian values and is looking for the opportunity to serve. Ross said in the last couple of years, he began observing what was happening in the country, and his eyes were wide and shocked. He believes that children are under attack both physically and spiritually, and he and his wife have decided that this is the time for parents to speak up.

Graham read from a written statement and said he was honored and grateful to have the opportunity to seek re-election. He felt that MA was one of the last beacons of hope, was at the forefront of radical ideologies, and needed to be willing to protect the innocence of children. He also said he was part of MA's course correction and believes the school is on the cusp of greatness. He spoke of some of the board's accomplishments of the past three years, including resolutions against critical race theory, testifying at the capitol against anti-charter legislation, and giving voice to parents. He said his vision over the next three years would be to continually stand firm against culture wars, a perpetual battle. He is also committed to ensuring MA can restructure its bonds before its balloon payment of \$29 million comes due in 2026, among other goals.

Clinton made a motion to approve by acclamation that Ross and Graham would begin three-year terms beginning July 1. The board unanimously approved this motion.

Positive financial report

MA's financial consultant, Glenn Gustafson, reported that the school was in a rhythm where it was closing month-end in a timely manner, getting payroll posted, getting the bank reconciliation done, balancing the books each month, and getting the financial results to the board.

He reported a meeting with Brett Ridgway, District 38's chief business officer, to review several line items that resulted in additional revenue streams that had not yet been distributed to MA. Those revenues have been received and recorded in the March finan-

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cial statements and have improved MA's financial position. One example was a Colorado state check for capital funding for FY2021 that was recently received by Lewis-Palmer School District and was quickly remitted to MA. He called attention to the end of the financial report, which showed the elementary school in positive territory with \$100,000 net income year to date, noting that the secondary was lagging with a negative amount of \$70,000 but was much improved from previous months. Gustafson said it sets MA up well to get through the remainder of the year to be in a much better position than initially thought.

He also dug into administrative costs with Ridgway, mutually discovering outdated allocations, which will be revised for FY22-23.

Gustafson also reported that MA is earning 4.5% on its market account with Integrity Bank, which he called "fantastic." He still wants to proceed with opening a ColoTrust account, as approved by the board in its January meeting, with a small balance so it could be used easily. The ColoTrust interest is 5%, so going with Integrity Bank only loses a few basis points while supporting a valued local partner. *See the article about ColoTrust at www.ocn.me/v23n2.htm#ma.*

Gustafson contacted MA's audit firm CliftonLarsonAllen CPA (CLA) about working on the tax return and will provide any additional information requested. The representative from CLA mentioned that its fees would increase from \$12,000 to \$30,000 with a similar increase for the school district, noting that he understood that MA might look at other options.

In his final section, Gustafson said Interim Chief Operating Officer Kim McClelland had pulled together the leadership team to work on the budget. Krista Pelley, director of People Operations, is working on the staff allocation for Gustafson to add to the budget, so they are on track with this process. He explained that traditionally, once the board approves the preliminary budget assumptions, there is a blackout period while staff builds the budget. He asked for additional time but said he was still on track to deliver the budget to the board in May for its approval by June 30, as required by law.

Gustafson explained that the Legislature was delayed in releasing the School Finance Act, which delayed the Colorado Department of Education from releasing the exact funding to each district. One serious concern was that the Legislature was considering diverting money from the cost-of-living factor to rural schools, impacting MA and D38 significantly. Local districts could see up to a \$6 million loss, and several factions, including school districts, the Colorado Association of School Executives, and the Rural School Alliance, were lobbying against this change.

Note: The state Legislature dropped these changes from the School Finance Act after this board meeting.

In his Finance Committee report, board member Joe Buczkowski confirmed that, of the additional revenues found, a significant amount was applied to the East Campus, which meant the East Campus could end up in the black compared to the budgeted \$376,000 loss and that there was now a very low risk that MA's cash on hand would fall below its 2019 bond covenant requirements. He also confirmed that both First National Bank and Integrity Bank, each of which holds over \$500,000 in certificates of deposit for MA, comply with the Colorado Public Deposit Protection Act, which protects deposits of public funds in excess of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. (FDIC) maximum of \$250,000. Finally, Buczkowski said MA in-

tended to post the director of finance position in May.

Handling snow days

High School Principal David Kennington discussed options for handling potential snow days and state instructional contact requirements. He noted that MA East could not accommodate another delay or closure after the most recent snow day and remain in compliance with state requirements. Through a joint effort of principals and the COO, the team considered three options:

1. Extending instructional hours. This could be done by converting the remaining Fridays from half to full days or adding minutes to each school day.
2. Extending the school year. This could be done by leveraging the May 19 teacher workday but is not a popular option as many parents already have made vacation plans.
3. eLearning days. Kennington said this was the preferred method, noting that Palmer Ridge High School was already doing this. eLearning would be the least disruptive and would include the opportunity for virtual meetings and synchronous or asynchronous learning leveraging free 40-minute Zoom sessions.

Kennington said most middle school teachers preferred eLearning, with high school teachers splitting between eLearning and extended days. The School Accountability Advisory Committee (SAAC) and the high school parent advisory group preferred eLearning. McClelland noted that the board did not have to vote on the decision but that she wanted them to know which option was preferred, also recounting that the school calendar has fewer half-day Fridays to avoid this issue next year. Clinton said she appreciated seeing the decision process and understood both the objections and the impacts.

Highlights

Board meeting highlights include:

- The board approved a special budget meeting at the East Campus on May 25 at 10 a.m.
- McClelland reported that she was now leading a technology committee and had put together teacher feedback, and had created a parent survey
- Graham reported that the Highway 105 expansion-related project had begun preliminary work with a drone pilot mapping out a parcel for the development of the recirculation.
- Board member Emily Belisle reported that they are in the draft stages of the new curriculum adoption policy, dividing it between main and supplemental curriculums taught to 75% and 25% of students, respectively. The math curriculum subcommittee was continuing to meet because of expected long-term changes and was looking at pros and cons and narrowing down which curricula the school should consider.
- Belisle noted that technology had been moved out of the umbrella of the curriculum committee, whose task was to home in on defining MA's approach and intention for using technology in education. She encouraged parents to provide feedback.
- Both the East and West Campus SAAC committees reported that end-of-year surveys were being finalized and requested that parents provide feedback.
- The board adjourned to executive session to

discuss security arrangements and the performance and evaluation process for administrators, returning to adjourn the meeting without further action, discussion, or public comments not pertaining to agenda items.

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, May 11, at 6 p.m. at the East Campus. See more information at [see https://bit.ly/ma-boe](https://bit.ly/ma-boe).

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

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Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education, April 17

New director sworn in; board reorganization; Safe and Welcoming Schools discussion

By Harriet Halbig

The Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education welcomed a new director and reorganized during its April 17 meeting. Additional business included a report on safe, healthy and welcoming schools (priority 1 in the strategic plan), employee health benefit changes, and policy revisions.

New director and reorganization

Former board President Chris Taylor resigned his position effective on the date of the February board meeting.

The board held a special meeting on April 8 to appoint a new member, Kris Norris. Norris was sworn in and signed an affidavit of confidentiality at this meeting.

As required by law, the members of the board then reorganized. Tiffney Upchurch and Ron Schwarz

were nominated as board president. Schwarz withdrew his name, commenting that he felt that his skill set was better suited to continue in another capacity.

Upchurch was then elected as president. Following a brief discussion, Norris was appointed as vice president. Schwarz will continue as treasurer, Theresa Phillips will serve as secretary, and Matthew Clawson will continue as director at large.

In their board member comments, several members welcomed Norris and thanked Upchurch for her willingness to serve as president. Clawson encouraged those who were eligible to run for office in November.

Upchurch commented that April is sexual violence recognition month and that freedom from assault is a human right. One of the public comments was made by a former student who suffered assault

while in the district and objected to the district recognizing her assailant as a successful athlete.

Superintendent KC Somers stated that the district is opposed to all forms of misconduct and takes all reports seriously. All students can file a report without fear of retribution, and he commended any student for standing up for their rights.

Somers further commented that there is an effort to educate on the concept of consent and responsible use of social media.

The district involves law enforcement when necessary

and is creating a district-wide safety task force.

Safe, healthy, and welcoming schools update

Executive Director of Student Services and Chief of Security Dennis Coates spoke about Priority 1 of the strategic plan: safe, healthy, and welcoming schools.

Coates said that the district's security protocols are confidential but outlined the comprehensive approach in use. The approach is divided into four categories.

Physical infrastructure includes the construction of

security vestibules in several schools, the use of 3M film to make it more difficult to break windows near entrances, addition of video cameras in many locations, and direct radio contact with first responders to allow the district to explain emergencies before their arrival.

The district has armed security on various campuses. Coates emphasized that the job of school resource officer is not just to look for troublemakers but to build relationships with all students so that they would feel comfortable confiding about things they had heard or seen that could cause a dangerous situation.

The district has active partnerships with the Monument and Palmer Lake police departments, the El Paso County Sheriff's Office, and Woodmoor Security. The Woodmoor Security officers also provide traffic control at school sites. The district also participates in the Tri-Lakes Social Emotional Wellness Coalition.

The district is involved with an active risk assessment program which involves a multidisciplinary team and parents. Monthly emergency drills including lockdowns and evacuations are held, and trainings teach students and teachers to be aware of their surroundings.

The district also utilizes a filter called Gaggle, which flags the mention of certain words and images on district Google devices. Gaggle is also engaged when a student uses personal devices if signed in on their district account.

Coates commented that the use of terms such as suicide are sometimes used in the process of researching a student project. In any case, school administrators intervene when an account is flagged.

Executive Director of Student Services Rick Frampton said goals of the district are to build relationships with students, encourage teachers to offer a respectful and inclusive learning environment, exhibit an ongoing commitment to nondiscrimination, combat bullying, and promote kindness.

Frampton said that the district has increased the number of counselors available at the high school level. Counselors for elementary students are hard to find, and psychologists and social workers are sometimes used in their place.

Frampton referred to last fall's student survey which found that at the secondary level, 76% of students felt that they knew an adult they could speak to about problems, 83% felt that teachers cared about them as an individual, and 70% felt a part of the school community. At the elementary level, 80% felt they know an adult they could confide in, 83% felt that teachers cared, and 80% felt like part of a community.

The spring student survey will be conducted soon.

Policy revisions

The board discussed changes in policy GCBA-R regarding revisions to the instructional staff contract. The primary change is to credit new hires with up to 15 years of previous experience. Previously, the district would credit up to 10 years.

Other aspects of the policy involve credit for achieving a master's degree or other outside training.

Policy IKF involves graduation requirements. The board voted to delete the requirement of a credit in world languages. The consensus of the board was that it is difficult to find teachers of world languages, but the district will help any student who requires this to apply to the college of their choice.

Financial planning and analysis

Chief Business Officer Brett Ridgway updated the board on developments in finance. He said that for the first time in many years, interest income has become a significant revenue source, yielding \$200,000 this year in the General Fund alone.

Schwarz asked how this money may be used.

Ridgway responded that this must be viewed as a one-time advantage and therefore could not be included in long-term use such as salaries. However, it could potentially

be used as a bonus.

At another point in the meeting, Ridgway discussed the pay schedule for the upcoming year. The amount of income from the state has not yet been finalized, but should be available in the next week or so. At that time, Ridgway anticipates that the increase may exceed the 8% previously noted.

Because the figures are not yet final, the board did not vote to ratify the new pay schedule.

For further details on the pay schedule, please see the discussion in the April issue at www.ocn.me/v23n4.htm#d38.

Health benefits update

Human Resources Director Alicia Welch outlined the options for health benefits in the upcoming year, including the addition of Health Savings Accounts. To view the PowerPoint on this subject, please see boarddocs, on the district website lewispalmer.org, board of education, boarddocs and select the meeting date.

Stars of Tomorrow

Richard Strom, Monument Hill Kiwanis program manager for the Stars of Tomorrow talent show, spoke about the success of the program. The aim of the program was to recognize students who excelled in the performing arts.

Fifty-three participants auditioned and 20 of them performed at Palmer Ridge High School before an audience and judges.

Winners at the elementary level were Rose Helgoth of St. Peter Catholic School and Eric Lambrecht of Lewis-Palmer Elementary. Secondary school winners were Raleigh Eversole of Palmer Ridge High School and Wyatt Hayden of Lewis-Palmer High School. Hayden won the grand prize.

Strom also mentioned other ways in which Kiwanis partners with the district.

The Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education meets at 6 p.m. on the third Monday of each month in the district's learning center, 146 Jefferson St. in Monument. The next meeting will be on May 15.

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



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Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, April 10

Trail agreement with school district approved

By James Howald

The Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) board approved an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with Lewis-Palmer School District 38 allowing the school district to use a maintenance road adjacent to Woodmoor Lake as part of its Safe Routes to School (SRTS) trail system. District Manager Jessie Shaffer updated the board on the status of WWSD's water meter replacement project. The board also heard operational reports. The meeting ended with an ex-

ecutive session.

SRTS takes a step forward

Board President Brian Bush asked the board to approve an IGA with the school district that would authorize the district to include a portion of a maintenance road that runs along the south and west edge of Lake Woodmoor in the SRTS trail system, which the school district has been planning for several years. The proposed trail system will connect Lewis-Palmer Elementary School,

Lewis-Palmer Middle School, and Palmer Ridge High School, allowing students to walk to those schools with the minimum exposure to traffic.

The text of the IGA specifies that bikes can't be ridden on the maintenance road. The IGA also says WWSD will not do additional maintenance for the road to accommodate its use as part of SRTS.

The school district will be responsible for building a bridge over the spillway in the

WWSD (Cont. on 20)



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WWSD (Cont. from 18)

south end of Woodmoor Lake and has obtained a separate grant to fund it.

The board voted unanimously to authorize Bush to sign the IGA.

Meter replacement project hits snag

Shaffer told the board that WWSD’s project to replace water meters with newer, more capable technology had uncovered an incompatibility between the electronic components in some of the new meters and the software the district uses to bill customers. About 430 recently replaced meters would need to have their network endpoints updated. The endpoints upload water usage data through a cell network to the billing software, which bills customers and enables them to track their water consumption online. Shaffer said customers with faulty meters have been identified and would be contacted to schedule the needed fix.

Operations Superintendent Dan LaFontaine emphasized that the endpoints would be replaced with no interruption to water service. Some customers

would receive an estimated bill for April, he said, adding the repairs should be done by the end of May.

Highlights of operational reports

- The Chilcott Ditch is being cleaned up, a new culvert has been installed, and water delivery to customers should begin by mid-May.
- Shaffer said the Colorado Senate was considering SB23-270, a bill which, if passed, would allow stream remediation projects to proceed with a simplified assessment of their impact on water rights. Shaffer said the Pikes Peak Regional Water Authority was opposing the bill on the grounds it could take away water rights in some cases.
- LaFontaine reported two main breaks and a tank overflow. The overflow was due to a radio failure, he said, adding that 70% of the overflow was recovered and added to Woodmoor Lake. A backup battery was added to prevent future overflow, he said.
- Equipment plans for Well 22 are being reviewed by El Paso County.

- Contractors have been lined up to begin work on Well 19.
- Tap permits for the Cloverleaf development in South Woodmoor are expected to be issued in six to eight weeks.
- The apartments planned for the Monument Junction have been delayed due to the current state of the housing market.

Executive session

The April meeting ended in an executive session to consider strategies relative to negotiations and receive legal advice concerning potential agreements with the Monument Fire District.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 8 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 or call 719-488-2525 to verify meeting times and locations.

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

Monument Sanitation District, April 20

Focus on infrastructure

By Jackie Burhans and James Howald

Infrastructure—sewer and network—was the main topic of discussion at the Monument Sanitation District’s (MSD) April meeting. District Manager Mark Parker briefed the board on repairs to three lift stations. He also filled the board in on a proposed upgrade to the network infrastructure in the MSD headquarters building. The board also heard operational reports.

Lift stations repaired

Parker told the board that lift stations in the Wakonda Hills, Wagon Gap, and Willow Springs neighborhoods had been repaired in the last month. Lift stations use pumps to ensure wastewater continues to flow in situations where gravity alone is insufficient.

In Wakonda Hills, the lift station’s pump failed, causing the circuit breaker to trip. The pump was replaced, which fixed the problem, Parker said. The Wakonda Hills and the Wagon Gap lift stations needed to be cleared of accumulated grit. The Willow Springs lift station had a water leak that resulted in a loss of 260,000 gallons of water. The developer was still working on the repair when the MSD board met, Parker said.

Parker noted that a bill had recently passed the

Colorado Legislature requiring the packaging for so-called “flushable wipes” to explain that the wipes may in fact clog wastewater facilities if they are flushed. The wipes are a common cause of expensive repairs to lift station pumps, Parker explained.

The board also voted unanimously to approve the bill of sale for the Willow Springs lift station. Lift stations are typically constructed by the developer and then, after inspection, sold to the sanitation district for a token price.

Network upgrade brings more speed, reliability

Parker told the board that he had received a proposal from Force Broadband to upgrade the headquarters building’s internet connection to optic fiber. Optic-fiber cables move data as pulses of light through glass fibers, increasing the speed and reliability of data transmission over copper cables.

Force Broadband is owned by Dan Hamilton, who serves as the president of the MSD board. Hamilton discloses this potential conflict of interest at the start of each MSD board meeting and recused himself from the discussion of the proposal.

Parker said discussions with Lolley’s Ice Cream and Black Forest Foods Café and Delicatessen were

underway to determine if they would want to help defray the \$1,800 cost of installing fiber-optic cable and make use of the improved internet access. The board took no action on the proposal at the April meeting.

Highlights of operational reports

- Parker told the board the employee handbook had been updated and now covered recently passed legislation such as the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Act.
- The district’s auditor is now requiring letters of engagement to be signed with service providers on an annual basis.
- The board discussed plans for a celebration in honor of MSD’s 60th birthday.

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

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

Donala Water and Sanitation District, April 20

Waste treatment plant debate continues

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

The Donala Water and Sanitation District (DWSD) board continued to discuss wastewater treatment strategies at its April meeting. Currently, DWSD shares the Upper Monument Creek Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility (UMCRWWTF) with three other water and sanitation districts: Academy Water and Sanitation District (AWS), Forest Lake Metropolitan District (FLMD), and Triview Metropolitan District (TMD). FLMD and TMD are considering sending their wastewater to a treatment facility run by Colorado Springs Utilities. General Manager Jeff Hodge brought the board up to date on recent communications with the managers of FLMD and TMD.

An updated contracting and procurement policy was voted on. The board also heard operational reports, and the meeting ended with an executive session to consider strategies relative to negotiations and receive legal advice concerning pending litigation.

UMCRWWTF likely to remain in production

In comments before the meeting, DWSD board President Wayne Vanderschure said he believed that the UMCRWWTF would continue to operate even if FLMD and TMD elect to send their wastewater elsewhere. Should FLMD and TMD leave the facility, AWS and DWSD would probably continue to oper-

ate it, he said.

Hodge outlines area of concern

Hodge summed up for the board a letter he had sent to Ann Nichols, FLMD general manager, and Jim McGrady, TMD general manager. DWSD is the facility operator, the letter points out, arguing when Nichols and McGrady contracted with Carollo Engineers Inc. they overstepped their authority. The letter objects to Nichols and McGrady requesting that the scenario where only DWSD would use the treatment facility be studied by Carollo. The letter points out that some of the tasks assigned by Nichols and McGrady to Carollo can be performed by current treatment facility staff.

The letter points out that DWSD’s legal counsel has found three issues with the agreement with Carollo: the creation of a multi-fiscal year financial obligation without the voter approval required by the Taxpayers Bill of Rights (TABOR); the requirement that the treatment facility indemnify Carollo; and the fact that McGrady signed the agreement with Carollo as “Owner” when DWSD is the plant operator.

The letter concludes by saying that DWSD does not object to FLMD and TMD doing their due diligence to decide whether they will continue to use the facility and by asking them to adhere to the terms of their agreement with DWSD.

Following Hodge’s update, Vanderschure pointed out that FLMD and TMD had not responded to the letter.

Procurement policy adopted

Hodge explained that minor changes to the procurement and contracting policy were required by the fact that DWSD is receiving American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) funding to remediate radium. ARPA funding requires more stringent bidding procedures, Hodge said.

The board decided that purchases and professional services from pre-approved vendor lists totaling less than \$50,000 would be subject to a simpler bidding requirement. Vanderschure said he wanted to preserve the ability to act quickly in emergency situations.

Highlights of operational reports

- Well 2D is producing 166 gallons per second.
- Variable Flow Devices (VFDs) are being added to several wells. VFDs help keep the flow into the filters at the processing plants at a steady level, which increases the filter’s efficiency.
- DWSD staff is focusing on cybersecurity.
- DWSD will add processing using hydrous manganese oxide to address radium instead of relying solely on the treatment plant filters.
- Roger Sams, an engineer with GMS Inc., said his company was starting to investigate direct potable reuse as a technology DWSD might use in the future. Direct potable reuse refers to designs where treated effluent is immediately returned to the distribution system without being discharged to a stream. The standards for direct potable reuse have not been clearly established by the state.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 18 at 1:30 p.m. Generally, board meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at 1:30 p.m. and include online access; call (719) 488-3603 or access www.donalawater.org to receive up-to-date meeting information. The district office is located at 15850 Holbein Drive, Colorado Springs.

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

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El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority, April 16

Acquisition policies approved

By James Howald

At its April meeting, the El Paso County Loop Regional Water Authority (EPCRLWA) board continued to draft procurement policies that meet the guidelines required by American Recovery Plan Act funding. A service for bidding and requests for proposals (RFPs) was selected. The board heard a brief financial report and made changes to its hiring requirement for a workflow manager position. The board also heard preliminary water quality test results.

The EPCRLWA was formed in November 2022 by an Intergovernmental Agreement between Cherokee Metropolitan District (CMD), Donala Water and Sanitation District (DWSD), the Town of Monument (TOM), and Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) to build infrastructure that would allow water, including treated effluent, that is flowing south in Monument and Fountain Creek to be stored at Callahan Reservoir at Woodmoor Ranch and then pumped back north to be used for customers of the participating districts.

Micro-purchases defined

EPCRLWA President Jessie Shaffer presented a draft of acquisition policies that addressed micro-purchases and bidding requirements. The policies were an extension of the reporting requirements presented by attorney Russell Dykstra at the previous meeting.

Shaffer said the acquisition policy defines micro-

purchases as the acquisition of supplies or services costing less than \$10,000. Micro-purchases require a minimum of two written or verbal quotes. The board may select the offer that provides the best value, even if that offer is not the lowest cost.

The board voted unanimously to approve the policies as presented.

BidNet selected for bids, RFPs

The board selected BidNet as the online platform for advertising bids and RFPs. Shaffer said that BidNet caters to public entities.

Financial report

Cathy Fromm of Fromm & Co LLC, the authority's accounting firm, told the board that a bank account had been established for EPCRLWA and she was now able to pay invoices on the authority's behalf. She said contributions from the four participating water districts had been received and deposited, so the authority was fully funded for the time being.

The board voted unanimously to approve the claims for the month and authorize payment.

RFP for workflow manager position updated

Shaffer said the job posting for a workflow manager had been updated in light of the new reporting and acquisition policies. Evaluation criteria, using a clearly stated point system, had been added to the RFP.

Shaffer said the EPCRLWA board expected to hire contractors, rather than employees, to complete most tasks, and the workflow manager would be expected to coordinate the efforts of the contractors.

The board voted unanimously to approve the updated RFP and post it on BidNet.

Initial water quality test results

John Hood of JVA Inc., the company hired to conduct ongoing water quality testing, presented some initial results. Hood said overall the water has a high concentration of dissolved minerals. The alkalinity and pH are in an acceptable range. Chlorides and sulfates are moderately high. Synthetic Organic Chemicals and Volatile Organic Compounds are not detectable, Hood said. He said the next water quality sampling would be done April 25.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for May 18 at 9 a.m. Regular meetings are usually held on the third Thursday of each month at 9 a.m. at the Monument Town Hall at 645 Beacon Lite Road. Workshop meetings are held every Thursday at 9 a.m. at rotating venues. Please see loopwater.org or call 719-488-3603 to verify meeting times and locations.

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

Triview Metropolitan District, April 20

Northern Delivery System pipeline installation begins

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Triview Metropolitan District (TMD) meeting on April 20, the four-member board heard about the Northern Delivery System (NDS) pipeline project timeline, approved the fourth amendment to a contract and an infrastructure agreement, and held an executive session to discuss negotiations regarding multiple projects, acquisitions, and negotiations.

Northern Delivery System

District Manager James McGrady said the kick-off meeting for the NDS project had taken place earlier in the day and construction would begin as early as late April with clearing the path of the pipeline. The pipeline installation is expected to begin by mid-May, beginning with the installation from "B" plant to "C" plant, then behind Sanctuary Pointe to Baptist Road. The pipeline installation along Roller Coaster Road is expected to last two months and begin on July 1. The roads will not be closed but at times will be restricted to local traffic only. All the pipeline is expected to be installed by October to allow a full asphalt overlay of the paved roads before winter. The pump station construction is expected to begin mid-June/July, he said.

NDS project hotline

Residents can keep up to date with the project timeline and submit comments and questions at www.triviewnds.com or leave a recorded message at 719-799-6533. Kiewit Infrastructure Corp., the main construction company and project manager, will be addressing the public's concerns during the project. Residents can also access the project site via www.triviewmetro.com.

Kiewit contract amendment

McGrady requested the board review and approve the fourth amendment to the contract between Kiewit and TMD, for a maximum price of about \$2.9 million for the construction portion of the Booster Pump Station. The complete Booster Pump Station will cost about \$5 million. Last month, the third amendment approved the purchase of materials for the station that will be constructed on Colorado Springs Utilities property. The water will be pumped from the pump station to "C" Plant at about 260-270 psi. The high-pressure valves and surge tanks drove the cost a little higher, he said. See www.ocn.me/v23n4.htm#tvmd. Th board unanimously approved the fourth amendment.

McGrady said the total cost of the NDS project is about \$21.8 million, about 10% higher than originally estimated in 2022.

Colorado Springs Utilities contract

McGrady said the Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) convey, treat, and deliver contract was approved at the Colorado Springs City Council on March 28.

Note: The 25-year contract with CSU to convey, treat and deliver district-owned water to TMD residents will cost about \$1.6 million in the first year.

Home Place Ranch infrastructure agreement

McGrady requested the board consider approving the first amendment to the Home Place Ranch Water and Sewer Infrastructure agreement between Home Place Ranch LLC and TMD. The development has shrunk from the original plan of about 1,000 homes to the new plan of about 300-400 homes, he said.

Water attorney Chris Cummins said when Challenger Homes purchased the property in 2018, the agreements were clunky for both parties. The infrastructure agreement was revised in 2019 when the district thought the developer would build about 400-600 homes. Since then, the developer has realized the hundred-acre woods, the topography, and the Preble's meadow jumping mouse habitat would be difficult to develop, and further reduced build-out. It is a good agreement that confirms the number of homes and provides a schedule, he said.

McGrady said the agreement had been available for some time, and the district has received \$600,000 for the sewer service from the developer. The development is 600 homes less than originally proposed about 20 years ago, but a significant number of homes have been built, with the developer paying for the infrastructure. Nothing has changed except the developer is ready to sign the agreement, he said.

The board unanimously approved the agreement.

Upper Monument Creek Waste Water Regional Treatment Facility

District attorney George Rowley requested the board approve Resolution 2023-03, appointing McGrady as the district representative for the Upper Monument Creek Waste Water Regional Treatment Facility (UM-CWRTF). Each of the three co-owners of the facility nominate a representative, he said.

The board unanimously approved the appointment.

Financial report

The board reviewed and approved checks above \$5,000, and unanimously approved the financial report as presented for March.

Note: The next district newsletter is expected to be sent to residents at the end of May. For more information on the district's water sources, residential watering restrictions, and district projects, visit www.triviewmetro.com.

Utilities Department update

Superintendent Shawn Sexton said the following:

- The Arapahoe 4 Well will be going online in late April, and the Arapahoe 9 Well will be out of service while the Dawson 9 is off-line until a new motor is received. A9 is really in service but needs to run with D9 until it can be disconnected from it.
- The plant is keeping up with demand without

full utilization of the online wells.

- A Plant is running 24/7 and B Plant is running about 12 hours a day. TMD has a large capacity of water in reserve.
- The booster pump station at C Plant on Vanderhoof Court had a pump upgrade on the No. 2 booster pump, but programming issues exist that will be completed April 24.
- Filters 1-2 were placed back into service at B Plant after Bacti clearance was completed. No damage had occurred to the filters after 20 years of service.
- Sewer line TV camera work was completed at Homeplace Ranch.
- Staff completed a walk-through with Nick Harris of JDS Hydro (a division of RESPEC), for five tie-ins between C and B plants for the NDS pipeline project. The project is large and will require coordination between the contractors and the TMD staff.

Forest Lakes Metropolitan District update

Sexton said TMD is coordinating with construction crews at the Forest Lakes Metropolitan District (FLMD) plant. FLMD construction crews are installing new raw water lines and making improvements to the well field for the ground water plant in the Falcon Commerce Center. TMD staff will be coordinating with the crews, he said.

Director James Otis asked about the Variable Frequency Drive (VFD) pump controller that failed during a recent snowstorm at the ground plant in FLMD. Sexton said a short out occurred in the VFD unit cabinet, causing a failure that likely occurred due to a lack

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of ventilation as a result of snow buildup. A loaner unit was hooked up to run manually. The failure is not preventing access to any supply of water and the surface plant has been online since mid-April.

Otis questioned if any possible design flaws at the FLMD plant were causing failures, given the short age of the plant.

Sexton said it is not due to design flaws, just hours of run time causing wear and tear, and the unit was approaching end of life, but the snow did not help.

Public Works and
Parks and Open Space update

Superintendent Matt Rayno said the following:

- The new barn in “A” yard is about 95% completed with the utilities stubbed out. The structure is awaiting trenching and a garage door, and the concrete floor is scheduled to be poured in late April. The yard will be graded and paved in mid-May. The heated barn will house the district’s sewer cleaning Vactor truck and snow removal vehicles and equipment. See www.ocn.me/v22n9.htm#tvmd.
 - The crews are working on the trail system irrigation for May 1, and seeding is expected to begin mid-May.
 - Spring cleanup around the district is underway.
- Treasurer/Secretary James Barnhart asked about the progress on Sanctuary Pointe Park after seeing dirt being moved.

Rayno said the original engineering plans had to be revised due to the 30-year floodplain requiring additions to the site. The contractor will be installing drainage and is hoping for a July 4 completion.

Note: The Sanctuary Pointe developer is responsible for the construction of this park.

Americans with Disabilities Act
ramp installed

This reporter requested the reason for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant ramp that connects the slope at the cul-de-sac at the north end of Agate Creek Drive to the trail system and said three residents had raised multiple questions about a potential loss of view, wheelchairs negotiating the ramp, and skateboarders who had already been using the ramp.

Rayno said the installation of the ADA-compliant ramp that joins to the trail between Venison and Saber Creek Drive was not requested by homeowners; it was a district decision to enhance the area and include access from the cul-de-sac to the trail. The hillside was scrub grass, but it is now landscaped with boulders, maples, and crabapple trees, and the remainder of the feature will be landscaped and fill the void, he said.

McGrady said the slope was around 2% and a switchback was incorporated into the design to keep the path ADA compliant. It is part of the overall improvement of the area and there is nothing that will

impede any view, he said.

President Mark Melville and Vice President Anthony Sexton did not feel that the ramp would be a problem drawing skateboarders, and bikers would just ride on through down to the trail.

Rayno said “good luck” to skateboarders negotiating the ramp once the area is completed. He confirmed that the connecting trail would be ADA compliant, and views will be no less impeded than before the installation. It will be quite beautiful when completed by the end of July, and a bench may be added in the future, he said.

Executive session

The board moved into executive session at 7:14 p.m. pursuant to Colorado Revised Statute 24-6-402(4) (a), (b), and (e), to discuss negotiations and receive legal advice associated with water delivery infrastructure, water acquisitions, and property acquisitions.

Steve Sheffield, assistant district manager, confirmed that when the board returned to the regular session there were no actions taken, and the meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Meetings are usually held on the third Thursday every month at the district office at 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for May 18 at 5:30 p.m. For meeting agendas, minutes, and updates, visit <https://triview.com>.

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

Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, April 13

Direction for water system and stormwater unclear

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

The Palmer Lake Board of Trustees (PLBOT) held an executive session before its regular board meeting on April 13 to discuss leasing proposals at the Elephant Rock property and an annexation request. The regular meeting opened with a presentation from CORE Electric Cooperative on its project to rebuild the town’s electrical infrastructure. The board considered six special event permit requests. Two ordinances and four resolutions were voted on.

Town staff asked for direction on improvements to the water system, on the development of a master plan for the town’s water system, and on drainage improvement plans. A public hearing on the Revised Pikes Peak Regional Building Code was held before a vote was taken on its adoption and application. Finally, the board issued a proclamation.

Electrical infrastructure project on track

Robert Osborn, director of Business Development for CORE Electric Cooperative, updated the board on the status of the project to bring the town’s electrical grid up to current standards. Two years ago, CORE began working to replace poles, add adaptive controls, and improve fire safety, Osborn said. The project schedule was slowed by COVID and the supply chain issues that resulted from the pandemic.

Osborn said CORE would continue to communicate with the town through mailings, its website, and via the town staff.

Osborn mentioned the 6% rate increase in 2022 was the first in 13 years and he did not expect to see another increase in 2023. He estimated the electricity CORE delivers to Palmer Lake, 36% of which is now from renewable sources, would increase to 80% renewable by 2025.

Mayor Glant Havenar urged Osborn to remove unneeded poles as quickly as possible.

Special events permits granted

The board voted to approve six special event permits:

- An Arts Council lecture at Town Hall on April 29. Kent Hutson was scheduled to speak about Artificial Intelligence technology.
- The Tri-Lakes Kids Fishing Derby on June 3. Sponsored by the Lions Club, the annual fishing derby typically draws 250 participants. Trustee Jessica Farr said this permit will be reviewed in May in light of the water level in the lake at that time.
- The Red Wine and Blue BBQ Dinner Dance on June 10. Food will be served on the Village Green. The event is a fundraiser sponsored by Awake Palmer Lake to pay for fireworks at the Festival on the Fourth, mentioned below.
- Palmer Lake Elementary School Fun Run on July 4. The 41st annual fun run will benefit the elementary school.
- The Festival on the Fourth. The event will run from 4 to 9 p.m. with fireworks at dusk, if conditions permit. It’s expected that 10,000 people are will attend to hear live music and enjoy Renais-

sance and street performers, balloonists, face painting, 10 food trucks and 30 other vendors. Admission is free, but there is a \$10 fee for parking. Proceeds will be used to defray the costs of the event.

- Palmer Lake Wine Festival on Sept. 9. About 1,500 attendees are expected at this festival, which benefits Tri-Lakes Cares and the Palmer Lakes Parks Commission. Havenar recused herself from the vote on this permit, which passed with the votes of Trustees Shana Ball, Nick Ehrhardt, Kevin Dreher, and Jessica Farr. Trustees Samantha Padgett and Dennis Stern were excused from the meeting.

Ordinances approved

The board voted unanimously to approve Ordinance 11-2023, which implements fees to recover the costs required to service land use applications, some of which require substantial work to complete.

The board also voted in favor of Ordinance 12-2023, which amends the town’s policy regarding short-term rentals (STRs). STRs with an accessory dwelling on the parcel will require a conditional use permit; fees will renew every 12 months from the date of first licensing; owner-occupied STRs are capped at 10% of residences and non-owner-occupied STRs at 5%; and applications and safety affidavits have been updated.

Resolutions approved

The board passed four resolutions at the April 13 meeting:

- Resolution 28-2023, which authorizes the Parks Commission to create a trail on the Elephant Rock property. The proposed trail would begin at Kent Street, cross the creek and connect to the Creekside trail and proceed southeast to the pavilion. The resolution originally specified parking at Epworth Highway and Greeley Boulevard, but that was removed.
- Resolution 29-2023, which directs a workgroup to draft a master plan for the Elephant Rock property. The workgroup will have representatives from the Palmer Lake Economic Development Group, Palmer Lakes Arts Council, Awake Palmer Lake, the Parks Commission, and residents adjacent to the property. The resolution calls for a 3-acre parcel adjacent to Highway 105 to be reserved for a future public safety building, a 2.8-acre area to be reserved for a spa and amphitheater, and for a walking trail to be included.
- Resolution 30-2023, which reinstates the Intergovernmental Agreement between Palmer Lake and Monument Fire District, so that ambulance service will be uninterrupted as a more long-term agreement is negotiated.
- Resolution 31-2023, which authorized Havenar to oppose Senate Bill 23-213, state legislation that sets new parameters for local control of land use policy.

Direction on water system
improvements and drainage plans

Town Administrator Dawn Collins asked the board for direction on two issues that previous boards began work on but could not complete due to the complexity and high costs involved: improvements to the town’s water system and its stormwater drainage infrastructure.

In August 2022, GMS Inc., the town’s consulting engineers, submitted a plan that addressed three areas of concern: water supply and treatment, including a new well into the Arapahoe aquifer and improved radium treatment; distribution, which requires replacement of pipes with lead joints and redesign of pipeline loops; and future line extensions required by expected growth. Mark Morton, of GMS, told the board that these areas of concern needed to be prioritized to assist with the search for funding.

Collins pointed out that an emergency ordinance passed in 2018 restricted the town’s service area, and she asked whether it should be repealed, saying she needed board direction to inform her discussions with developers.

In terms of plans to improve the town’s management of storm water drainage, Collins told the board that GMS had presented a report in 2022 to a previous board on the High Street drainage basin that proposed three designs for handling stormwater. Costs were included in the report. A clear direction was not established by the previous board. Morton pointed out that a stormwater enterprise would need to be established.

The board agreed to return to both issues at its next meeting.

Public hearing and proclamation

A public hearing was held at the April 13 meeting on the adoption of the Revised Pikes Peak Regional Building Code. There was minimal discussion by the public, and the board voted to approve Ordinance 10-2023 to adopt and apply the revised code. Farr voted no; Ball, Ehrhardt and Dreher voted yes.

The board issued a proclamation declaring the week of April 23 to be National Library Week.

Executive session

The executive session addressed negotiating strategies concerning leasing town property at the Elephant Rock site, the terms of the IGA with Monument Fire District and advice from the town’s attorney on a possible annexation request from Challenger Homes at Ben Lomand Mountain.

The next board meetings are scheduled for May 12 and 26. See the town’s website at 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.

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

Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, April 27

Strategies for water and drainage take shape

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

The Palmer Lake Board of Trustees (PLBOT) held a workshop to discuss water rates before opening its regular meeting on April 27. At the board meeting following the workshop, it voted on a resolution to formally accept a preliminary engineering report on the town’s water system. The board continued its discussion of how to handle stormwater drainage, and then took up the issue of security at the Elephant Rock property.

The board voted on a resolution that would authorize the acceptance of funds for the Main Street Design project. Finally, resident Marty Brodzik used the public comment period to ask questions about the town’s budget.

Rates analyst presents draft

At the workshop meeting, Chris Brandewie, of Water Rates by Brandewie, told the board he does water rate studies for smaller communities, many of which have never had a formal rate study done.

The first part of his presentation focused on the variables that need to be factored into a rates analysis. He stressed the benefits of a capital asset plan and a focus on being proactive not reactive. Potential funders like to see precise asset inventories in place, and asset inventories can help educate the public. Brandewie said he had worked with staff on Palmer Lake’s asset inventory and had access to information collected by GMS Engineers Inc., the town’s consulting engineers. The town has renewable surface water and ground water, he said, so supply is resilient. These assets formed the basis of his funding plan, he said.

Brandewie said assets that have a high risk of failure and high consequences of failure should be fixed first. Assets with a low risk of failure and low consequences should be monitored.

He mentioned three funding models: pay as you go, save money in advance of need, and seek grants.

Brandewie pointed out that the town’s reservoirs would fill in eventually and its long-term planning would need to accommodate that.

Mayor Glant Havenar raised the issue of how long the planning window should be—she pointed out that the town could grow 30% by 2045. She questioned whether it was fair to ask today’s ratepayers to fund repairs that might be decades away. She suggested a 25-year planning window.

Brandewie asked the board for direction on its priorities for capital improvement, which would help him determine how many dollars the town should be putting into reserve each year. He estimated that it would require \$570,000 going into reserves each year to fund the replacement of the existing infrastructure. He said he realized that was not realistic.

In response to a question from the audience, Brandewie said the town had \$600,000 in its Water Enterprise Fund and \$132,000 for capital improvements.

Trustee Kevin Dreher asked Brandewie if he thought the town could raise money by selling water rights. Brandewie replied that his assumption was the town did not have enough water.

Havenar said she wanted to balance the town’s water fund, plan for the future, and determine a rate increase that would cover future needs.

Materials in the packet mentioned a new water meter system from Mountain States Pipe and Supply that will improve meter reading capabilities. When combined with the town’s meter analytic software, the meters would provide alerts, a customer portal, and other features.

Following the discussion, the board agreed to

continue their planning at a workshop at 5 p.m. on May 3.

Preliminary report on water system accepted

The board voted to approve Resolution 35-2023, which formally accepts a preliminary engineering report on improvements needed to the town’s water system that was written by GMS Inc. in 2022 but never officially accepted by the previous board.

The report recommends many improvements, organized into three priorities:

Priority 1

- A new Arapahoe formation well.
- Groundwater treatment plant improvements.
- Distribution system pipeline replacements on Park Street, Upper Glenway Street, Glenway Street, Valley Crescent Street, Shady Lane, and Hilltop Road.
- Total preliminary project cost estimate for Priority 1: \$4.75 million.

Priority 2

- Distribution system looping redesign on County Line Road, Shady Lane, and Red Rocks Ranch Drive.
- Total preliminary project cost estimate for Priority 2: \$1.26 million.

Priority 3

- Distribution system extension to serve properties on private wells.
- Total preliminary project cost estimate for Priority 3: \$4.07 million.

The complete water system improvement report can be found on the town’s webpage here: <https://www.townofpalmerlake.com/water/page/water-system-studiesreports>.

Stormwater strategy debated

The board returned to its discussion of how to manage stormwater drainage that it began at its April 13 meeting.

In May 2022, GMS prepared a report for the town that laid out three designs for a way to prevent flooding by building a system for stormwater that would keep it out of streets and gutters. The report proposed three alternative designs:

- An above-ground design that would handle a 10-year flood and cost \$400,000.
- An underground system that would handle a 100-year flood and cost \$2.08 million.
- A hybrid system, with portions above and below ground, that would cost \$885,000.

Mark Morton, representing GMS, told the board it would need to decide which alternative it wanted to pursue before searching for funding. He recommended establishing a stormwater enterprise fund as a next step. He pointed out that a properly managed discharge of stormwater was required by law, and the town could be fined if it does not comply with regulations.

Residents Roger Mosely and Marty Brodzik both argued against creating a stormwater enterprise fund.

The stormwater drainage report can be found here: https://www.townofpalmerlake.com/sites/default/files/fileattachments/public_works/page/6245/master_drainage_plan_report.pdf.

The board decided to add the drainage discussion to the workshop scheduled for May 3.

Security concerns at Elephant Rock property

Havenar told the board security issues at the Elephant Rock property needed to be addressed. The Colorado Intergovernmental Risk Sharing Agency (CIRSA),

which insures the town, had concerns about the property, she said. Town Administrator Dawn Collins added that CIRSA had recommended that doors and windows be secured and “No Trespassing” signs be posted. She said she had requests to tour the buildings, so a security plan had to account for that access. Collins asked the board for suggestions on how they would like to improve security.

Havenar asked what would be required to be able to leave the gate to the property open. Collins said that would require grading a parking area and removing hazards. Dreher said he believed \$5,000 was budgeted for securing the property and Collins confirmed. Trustee Dennis Stern said he was not comfortable spending \$5,000 on something the town would be getting rid of.

Collins raised the issue of liability should someone be injured in one of the buildings.

Lindsay Willan, who with Richard Willan are working on a plan to use a portion of the property for a spa, said she believed other entities are interested in the property and have made offers. She asked if the board was waiting for a master plan before deciding on leasing any other the buildings. She said a decision on leases would make the issue of security moot. Ball said she would like to see all the offers and discuss them.

The discussion ended without a clear decision.

Main Street redesign funding

Collins told the board that a discussion about how to improve safety issues on Main Street, such as changes to parking and a crosswalk at Pie Corner, had led to a grant of \$150,000 from the Multimodal Transportation and Mitigation Fund (MMOF) for the design of the improvements. Resolution 34-2023 authorizes an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Colorado Department of Transportation so that the town can accept the funds. The board voted unanimously in favor of the resolution.

Questions at public comments

Resident Brodzik asked the following questions during public comments:

- Why is the 2023 Grant Fund monthly report the only fund that doesn’t show funds available beginning of year and end of year?
- Why does the 2023 Grant Fund monthly report not reflect the Water Department’s budgeted expenditure of \$259,000 for American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) funds?
- How is the Water Enterprise going to cover the budgeted \$155,000 shortfall for operations and maintenance?
- Where is the Water Enterprise Fund’s restricted capital monies, remaining actual \$368,000 from 2022, and budgeted 2023 of \$155,000?
- Where is the missing actual 2022 \$127,000 of ARPA monies in the Grant Fund?
- Why doesn’t the Grant Fund show the actual 2022 \$127,000 of ARPA monies as “infrastructure restricted”?

The next board meetings are scheduled for May 12 and 26. See the town’s website at 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.

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

Woodmoor Improvement Association, April 26

Board considers common area concerns

By Jackie Burhans

At its April meeting, the Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) board considered parking and rodent concerns at its newest common area as well as a request to purchase a portion of one of its common areas. The board heard about leveraging a county portal to report on roadwork needs and other operational reports.

Concerns at The Preserve

President Brian Bush noted that a resident had brought up a concern about people parking on the roads near the newest common area known as The Preserve in South Woodmoor to access its trails. Bush

noted that all roads in Woodmoor are under the authority of El Paso County rather than WIA. He also reiterated that WIA, as a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization, has no authority to restrict public access to the common areas in Woodmoor. Finally, he noted that WIA had just taken ownership of The Preserve land recently and would keep an eye on the parking situation but felt it was too early to decide on any course of action.

Similarly, he brought up a concern about prairie dog activity in The Preserve area, some of which may be caused by the increased construction in the Clover Leaf, Monument Junction, and Home Place Ranch

developments. He felt it was too early to address this issue as well.

Bush asked for and received the board’s unanimous consent and ratification of this position.

Request to purchase part of common area

Bush said a resident had approached WIA with a request to purchase a portion of one of its common areas adjacent to their lot to combine it and offer the entire parcel for sale. He explained that WIA’s covenants do not allow it to sell or transfer any common area to any individual. He noted that it would take a vote with two-thirds of property owners agreeing to even allow an easement to a public utility. The only

way to get around the restriction would be to change the covenants, and he believes the board would not recommend an election to change the covenants to sell a part of a common area.

He said he believes that the vast majority of residents wouldn’t want the board to sell a portion of any common area. Bush said he did not want to open that Pandora’s box for any reason and feels that the original developers made it difficult to sell the common areas for a reason. While the resident accepted that response, Bush asked the board for its consent and ratification of that position, which it unanimously provided.

Note: The WIA covenants and other governing documents can be seen at <https://woodmoor.org/governance/>.

County portal used to report road issues

Director of Woodmoor Public Safety (WPS) Brad Gleason noted that WPS customarily provided a semi-annual road assessment to El Paso County but had not found that to be very effective in getting roads repaired. WPS now uses the county’s Citizen Connect portal to provide information and hopes that will be more responsive. Board Vice President Peter Bille said that the portal works and WPS Chief Kevin Nielsen confirmed that it gives you an email trail of your request. Bush asked Nielsen to contact the county to see if he could get a list of planned road work over the summer so WIA could provide that information to its residents.

You can learn more about and sign up for the El Paso County Citizen Connect portal at <https://www.elpasoco.com/county-launches-citizen-connect/> or via the EPC Citizen Connect app, which is available for both iOS and Android devices from their respective app stores.

Board highlights

- A resident who noted she had not received promised communication via mail or email was provided a paper version of the mail sent and told that her email domain was blacklisted so the association was unable to email her and that her area was known for difficulty with mail and package deliveries.
- Homeowner Association Administrator Denise Cagliari noted that there were 114 properties with outstanding dues and that WIA would be filing 65 additional liens for unpaid dues.
- Director of Covenants Per Suhr noted that there were 25 reports in March with no covenant violations. There were two unfounded complaints, and 12 issues were resolved with friendly letters or phone calls. There was no covenant hearing needed in April, and he thought there would not be one needed in May.
- Director of Architectural Control Ed Miller reported that there were 39 projects submitted in March of which 29 were approved by the office, nine were approved by the Architectural Control Committee and one was disapproved. The total

- number of projects to date this year is 92, which is down 21.4% from 2022, with an approval rate of 98.9%.
- Director of Forestry Cindy Thrush reported that WIA is working with the state forestry office on additional funding opportunities for wildfire mitigation. The chipping dates are set for June 10 and 11 and for July 29 and 30 at Lewis-Palmer High School. This service is free to Woodmoor residents to dispose of slash from their property.
 - Director of Common Areas Steve Cutler reported that common area mitigation has been scheduled along with spraying for noxious weeds in May. Information will go out to residents near The Preserve in South Woodmoor about the noxious weed program to get their buy-in and participation on their own properties to benefit themselves as well as the common area.
- *****

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 May 24.

The WIA calendar can be found at www.woodmoor.org/wia-calendar/. WIA board meeting minutes can be found at www.woodmoor.org/meeting-minutes/ once approved and posted.
Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

April Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

April was a “back to normal” month around the region, with temperatures just a little cooler than normal overall and precipitation, including snowfall, right about where we would expect. But as always during this time of the year, the transition from winter to spring never goes smoothly. This meant the path to normal was anything but normal, with swings from winter to spring and back to winter happening every few days. This was a nice change from last April when we had a record dry April. And given that moisture in April is very important for us to kick off the growing season, the moisture we received was extremely beneficial.

The first week of the month was a good example of most of the month. Temperatures started off in the low to mid-60s over the first three days with dry conditions. But a cold front moved through just after midnight on the 4th, bringing a swing to cold conditions and snowfall. Temperatures were in the 30s and 40s from the 4th through the 6th with 4-8 inches of snow accumulating. In addition, clearing skies and fresh snowfall allowed temperatures to fall quickly on the morning of the 5th. The low dipped down to the single digits above and below zero, which are near-record levels for this time of the year.

Quiet and mild conditions quickly returned over the next week, with our warmest temperatures of the month occurring from the 10th through the 12th. Temperatures warmed through the 50s on the 7th, to the 60s on the 8th and 9th to near daily record levels in the mid- to upper 70s on the 11th and 12th. Of

course, this stretch of mild weather was interrupted by another cold front and quick shot of wet snow on the 14th and 15th. This round of snow and cold started off with some good old rain showers and graupel during the late morning and early afternoon, then quickly switched to heavy snowfall. There was even some thunder mixed in during the afternoon. Snow continued that evening and through the next morning, with another 4-8 inches accumulating in the area.

The weather pattern again swung to the mild side over the next few days, with 50s and 60s returning from the 16th through the 19th. However, another round of cool and unsettled weather moved in starting on the 20th and continuing through the 28th. During this unsettled period, several rounds of snow and wind affected the area with 5-12 inches accumulated during the week. However, we actually got “lucky” as there was significantly more snowfall in regions to our south and to our northeast.

The last few days of the month saw a return to mild conditions, with lots of sunshine and 60s for highs.

A couple of interesting things to note during this time of the year. First, the snow that does fall melts very quickly, even when the temperatures are cold. This is because the sun angle is much higher, similar to August. Second, elevation plays a critical role in snowfall amounts as we head into spring. The 7,000-foot level is often a dividing line between snow and rain and even a few hundred feet of elevation can make a big difference. Just going from I-25 in Monument to the top of the Palmer Divide around Hod-

gen and Highway 83 can be the difference between 6 inches of snow and no snow accumulations. Just more of the fun things we get to enjoy around the Tri-Lakes region.

A look ahead

May often brings a wide variety of weather conditions to the region, from warm, sunny days to severe thunderstorms and hail, and even some snowfall. We can see very wet weather, sometimes heavy snow and other times our first 90-degree temperatures of the year. So be prepared for just about anything.

April 2023 Weather Statistics

Average High	56.3° (-0.2°)
Average Low	25.5° (-2.1°)
Highest Temperature	77° on the 11th, 12th
Lowest Temperature	1° on the 5th
Monthly Precipitation	2.34” (-0.62”, 20% below normal)
Monthly Snowfall	24.4” (-2.3”, 96% below normal)
Season to Date Snow	71.1” (-46.5”, 9% below normal) (the snow season is from July 1 to June 30)
Season to Date Precip.	4.47” (-1.73”, 28% below normal) (the precip season is from January 1 to December 31)
Heating Degree Days	724 (+35)
Cooling Degree Days	0
Bill Kappel is a meteorologist and Tri-Lakes resident. He can be reached at billkappel@ocn.me .	

Letters to Our Community

Guidelines for letters are on page 31.

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

Monument Town Council opposes bill

As duly elected representatives of the citizens of the Town of Monument, Colo., we want to fervently declare our opposition to Senate Bill 23-213, regarding land use authority. When it comes to matters that should be of local concern—specifically related to land use authority, SB23-213 has been characterized as an attempt to provide affordable housing while, in fact, it is a sweeping attack on local decision-making authority. This is both an attack on home rule authority and an unfunded mandate as it requires the town to expend what will be an inordinate amount of funds for studies that will not actually solve the problem that the bill purports to address. Our community will be directly impacted by the components of this staggering legislation by:

- Eliminating our ability to zone multi-family housing to locations where the infrastructure is in place to provide the necessary services.
- Removing our discretion to place certain criteria on multi-family housing, such as parking requirements, along with other infrastructure improvements necessary for the high-density development envisioned by the bill.
- Allowing the character of neighborhoods to be destroyed by forcing incompatible land uses directly adjacent to single-family homes.
- Mandating expensive studies relative to housing and water resources, much of which is already duplicated in existing local planning documents.
- Shifting the burden and responsibility of what have traditionally been local decisions up to a state agency, thus removing local accountability to voters.

The entire bill reflects the state’s belief that it knows far more about what’s best for the quality of life in our communities than our own citizens do. It removes decision-making from the people who are impacted by those decisions and shifts it to a bureaucratic entity

that has no vested interest in the Town of Monument, our families, or our character. For those reasons, we strongly ask our legislators to reject this state government power grab.

Mitch LaKind, Mayor, Steve King, Mayor Pro Tem Sana Abbott, Ken Kimple, Jim Romanello, Marco Fiorito, and Laura Kronick, Town Council Members

Animals and humans in danger from wildfires

The wildfire burning in Park County, near Florissant, is a reminder that it is not just humans’ lives and homes that are threatened by wildfires. Deer, bears, birds, fish, reptiles, and other animals are killed or displaced, too.

The impacts are also immediate, debilitating and often life-threatening: Thick smoke disorients them, irritates their eyes and makes breathing difficult. Larger animals may try to outrun the flames, while small animals may try to shelter under rocks and in burrows. Those with babies or who are trapped by fences or other structures may not escape.

We can help protect animals and their habitats by eliminating our role in igniting wildfires: Report

unattended fires, extinguish campfires and fire pits, keep vehicles off dry grass, don't throw lit or smoldering cigarettes from your car or truck, and check the weather conditions before burning trash or leaves. While most naturally occurring wildfires are sparked by lightning, thousands are triggered every year by fireworks. The precaution we can take cannot be clearer.

Craig Shapiro, PETA Foundation

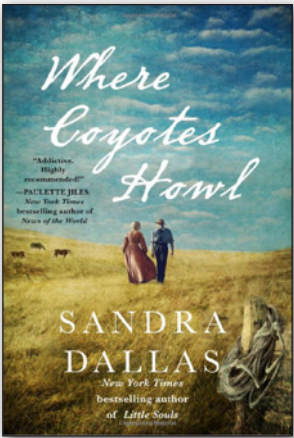
Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

Reading the West

By the staff at Covered Treasures
“Courage is being scared to death ... and saddling up anyway.”—John Wayne

Westerns are part of our history and center on courage, strength, and justice. Here’s a sampling of outstanding fiction and nonfiction Western reads:

Where Coyotes Howl
By Sandra Dallas (St. Martin’s Press) \$27.99
It’s 1916. The two-street town of Wallace, Wyo., is not what Ellen Webster had in mind when she accepted a teaching position, but within a year she’s fallen in love with the High Plains and with a cowboy. Life is hard, but Ellen and Charlie face it all together, growing stronger with each shared success, and each deeply felt tragedy. Ellen finds purpose as a rancher’s wife and in her bonds with other women. Bestselling Colorado author Sandra Dallas’ meticulous research and detail is an ode to western history.



White Sands Gold
By Mike Torreano (Wild Rose Press) \$18.99
New Mexico Territory, 1890. In a hidden cavern, a treasure trove of gold sits alongside an ancient relic. To find her treasure-hunting brother, Lottie Durham enlists the help of an easygoing lawman. When a mysterious woman asks her to join the relic’s guardians, Lottie’s world spins. Should she take on this solemn

obligation? Will a looming raid by a band of determined killers be the end of the guardians, the gold, and the relic? Local author Mike Torreano provides twists, turns, and adventure in this historically accurate Western.

The Son
By Philipp Meyer (Harper) \$16.99
This critically acclaimed, bestselling epic, a saga of land, blood, and power follows the rise of one unforgettable Texas family from the Comanche raids of the 1800s to the oil booms of the 20th Century. This gripping novel maps the legacy of the American west with rare emotional acuity, even as it presents an intimate portrait of one family across two centuries.

Old Cowboys Never Die
By William W. Johnstone and J.A. Johnstone (Kensington) \$16.95
After 30 years chasing stampedes into storms and pushing herds of cows across the plains, longtime buddies and cattle drivers Casey Tubbs and Eli Doolin are ready to hang up their spurs. But when they get to Abilene with their final cow delivery, the company lawyer has skipped town with their crew’s wages. That means one last job for Eli and Casey—steal it back. After pulling off the perfect crime, Casey and Eli start thinking this could be the start of a new career as outlaws. This is the first in a new series.

A Tale of Two Expectations
By James Mariner (Dorrance) \$19
It is 1884 and Caleb O’Rourke leaves his home in Connecticut. Arriving in Montana, he is discovered by Matthew Rangely and becomes the cowboy of his visions. Five years later, willful, well-to-do, city-bred Marie Devereaux boards the new westbound Northern Pacific train and encounters Rangely, who con-

vinces her to find her place in his little town. When Marie meets Caleb, her skill as a teacher and his willingness to learn result in changing expectations for both.

Blood and Thunder: The Epic Story of Kit Carson and the Conquest of the American West
By Hampton Sides (Anchor) \$20
The Army of the West marched through Santa Fe in 1846, en route to invade and occupy the Western territories claimed by Mexico. Fueled by the new Manifest Destiny, this land grab would lead to a decades-long battle between the United States and the Navajos. At the center of this sweeping tale is Kit Carson, the trapper, scout, and soldier whose adventures made him a legend. Rich in detail and spanning more than three decades, this is an essential addition to our understanding of how the West was really won.

New Women in the Old West: From Settlers to Suffragists, an Untold American Story
By Winifred Gallagher (Penguin) \$18
Hundreds of thousands of men and women traveled deep into the American West between 1840 and 1910. The traditional model of womanhood shifted. By 1914 western women became the first American women to vote; a right denied to women in every eastern state. Drawing on an extraordinary collection of research, Winifred Gallagher weaves together the legacy of persistent individuals who not only created homes on prairies but also played vital roles in forever redefining the American woman.

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

May Library Events

Preparations for summer reading underway

By Harriet Halbig
The library’s Summer Adventure summer reading program will begin on June 1.
Would you like to be involved? The library is seeking teen volunteers to help with the program, registering participants, awarding prizes, and helping with

special programs and with the activities that keep the library running during this busy time.
To apply as a volunteer, go to the library website, ppld.org. Click on About Us and Volunteer to find the application.
We hope you will join us!

Please note that all Pikes Peak Library District facilities will be closed on May 29 in observance of Memorial Day.
Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me

Palmer Lake Historical Society, April 20

Pikes Peak Library District holds wealth of history

By Marlene Brown
At its April 20 meeting at the Palmer Lake Town Hall, the Palmer Lake Historical Society (PLHS) hosted Brett Lobello, director of the Regional History and Genealogy Department of the Pikes Peak Library District (PPLD).
Lobello explained how the PPLD houses several papers and collections from area families and noted influential personalities of the late 1800s and early 1900s. The special collections are housed in the 1905 Carnegie Library located at 20 N. Cascade Ave. in Colorado Springs. The genealogy collections contain U.S. research materials from Colonial times to the present, including, books, periodicals, and access to major genealogical databases. For more information on archiving and researching, go to ppld.org/regional-history-and-genealogy. Regional History and Genealogy staff care for non-circulated historic documents held

in public trust by PPLD.
Some of the collection includes papers from Ruth Banning-Lewis, whose family’s ranch covered over 30,000 acres east of Colorado Springs. Her collection includes notes taken at Lowell School and Wellesley College. Most of the collection is composed of newspapers clippings, leaflets, brochures, and pamphlets of a political scope during her time serving on the School District 11 board, as founding member of Girl Scouts Council of Colorado Springs, and organizer of the Pikes Peak Chapter of the American Red Cross Volunteer Nurse’s Aid Corps. She was on the board of the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, and from 1943-47 served on the Colorado Springs City Council.
Another special collection housed at the Carnegie Library in the photo archives is the Stuarts Aerial Collection from 1948-99. It contains aerial photographs of the building and construction of the City of Colo-

rado Springs and other projects in El Paso County, including the Air Force Academy in the early 1960s.
Individuals can do research through Pikes Peak Newspapers at ppld.org/databases/newspaper-archive. The database contains tens of millions of fully searchable newspaper articles by keywords and dates from 1607 to the present.
Contact Special Collections to make an appointment with a librarian (719) 531-6333 ext. 1253 to gain access to more information.

The next meeting of PLHS will be at the Palmer Lake Town Hall on the third Thursday of the month, May 18, 7 p.m. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. For more information, go to palmerdividehistory.org
Marlene Brown can be reached by email at marlenebrown@ocn.me.

High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

No mow May; planting in our mountain forest climes

By Janet Sellers
Habitat loss: bulldozers or lawns?
Lawns represent the single largest irrigated crop grown in the U.S. and are actually harmful to our ecosystem. Use of pesticides, herbicides, and toxins aside, monoculture lawns lack floral and nesting re-

sources to support important myriad bees (the superfamily Apoidea, containing at least 5,700 species of bees).
Pollinators rely on us to help in May. The USDA Forest Service reported a study showing “that cutting the grass every two weeks resulted in signifi-

cantly higher bee abundance. Less frequent mowing gives lawn flowers like dandelions and clover—this is where social pressure comes to bear—a little more time to grow and blossom, resulting in nourishment for bees.” Other studies showed that three-week intervals dramatically increased native pollinators and

ecosystem health.

If we want something different in addition to our beloved pine forests of our environs, we need to plan for it with Mother Nature's support.

Starting seeds indoors for a head start

I started seedlings in compostable clamshell containers that my muffins come in. It works great: add seedling mix, seeds, water, close the lid and in two weeks I had 5-inch sprouts. I made a mistake: I used compost. I had two seedlings out of 12 seeds planted. Two

areas turned moldy; two were fine. I don't know what caused the mold, but a seedling mix would have worked better.

Here's the better way for our area:

1. Start seeds with a seed-starting mix that has what you need for that purpose: coconut coir, peat moss, perlite, etc. for even moisture and some basic nutrients to get the seeds started. Loose, fluffy textures let the seeds emerge without clumps. The delicate sprouts need to stretch both up and down into the mix.

2. Pot up (transplant) at 2-3 inches high to a bigger container of potting soil (it's heavier, looser for airflow, and has more nutrients to support the baby plant). People use fancy pots, plant trays, or just rip holes in the soil bag for this stage of transplanting. Beware of tangled roots and gently separate the plants so they have their own space to grow. If they are too tangled, choose the stronger one to transplant. I usually try to save both—sometimes I can save most of them.

3. Then wait for the outdoor weather to be warm enough to support the plants, usually by Memorial Day weekend. Many plants will be fine in larger pots, especially the fabric grow bags. Place outdoors after all danger of frost (Ask the weather forecasters!) right in the grow bags or in your prepared garden bed.

Janet Sellers, an avid "lazy gardener," lets Mother Nature lead the way with Colorado high desert forest gardening. Contact her: JanetSellers@ocn.me.

Art Matters

Contemporary art prints and artist handmade books



By Janet Sellers

What is contemporary art?

Contemporary art is art made by living artists and encompasses a wide range of materials from the precious to everyday objects or materials, and includes electronic media and ephemera (typically, written, or printed items of collectible memorabilia).

The aesthetic value resides in the intention or purpose of the artwork instead of mere materials. Artists sell prints of their work from their own paintings, photography and their artist book images printed on a variety of materials including paper, cloth, wood, natural and synthetic as well as recycled materials. Mass production of the artists' works are often made in posters and in mass-produced books by museums and publishing houses.

What is an artist book?

Around 1783, William Blake's first collection of poems, *Poetical Sketches*, was printed. As artist, poet, and print-maker, he may be the forerunner of artist books, making his own books with words and images, and predecessor to the artist books of the 1960s. Art-

ist books since the 1950s are considered an independent, unconventional art medium, an appealing alternative space for art.

The Smithsonian Library explains, "... In the United States, Ed Ruscha produced some of the first artist books consisting of compilations of photographs with a title on the front cover and little narrative quality. Other artists used the book format to create narratives to deal with difficult or emotional issues, and some used it as a cheap, portable way to make the artwork available to a broader public than the gallery and museum world allowed.... Books are meant to be touched, and their pages turned, but an art object is usually only experienced under glass in a museum. These are issues that affect the work of artists, practitioners of book arts, curators, museum collections staff, librarians, publishers, and others. Yet the problems of the ambivalent nature of the artist's book is part of what gives it such interesting potential ..."

What are artist books and artist book print editions?

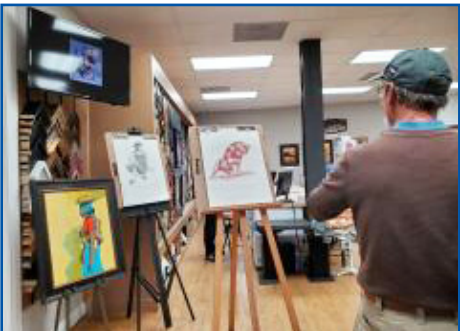
An artist book, *Livre d'artiste*, is art in

book form. We might call it imagination that we can hold in our hands. The artist book creator has complete control over the creation, materials, content, and all aspects of the intention of the artwork. An artist book can be made of rare or common materials at hand for the artists' creation, including up-cycled paper or common printer paper. The latter is often used for artist books and repurposed books. The materials used are purposely chosen by the artist.

Artist books and prints represent powerful, personal aesthetic forces for communication. And unlike mass-produced books, artist books are intended for a smaller circulation of less than 1,000-5,000, often with smaller signed and numbered circulations of 1-100 for handmade prints, books or 'zines. Artist books and prints are small scale and cost effective, using simple production processes. They are valued for their uniqueness and limited numbers and are collected by many, including the archives of museums, universities, and libraries worldwide.

Janet Sellers is an artist, writer, and speaker. Her paintings, sculptures, and

print artworks are exhibited coast to coast and locally in Colorado. Contact her at JanetSellers@ocn.me.



Above: Downtown Monument venues hosted the annual *No Boys Allowed Tour* on April 20, with 250 tickets sold. Women patrons enjoyed special snacks and sales, and collected a free gift from every location, including Bella Art and Frame Gallery, shown here with artist Mark Dixon drawing people during the event. Downtown Monument Art Hop season starts May 18, 5-8 pm., showcasing local contemporary art and artists. Visitors enjoy and buy art while surrounded by live music, food, and fun. Photo courtesy of Maggie Williamson.

Snapshots of Our Community

Donations to Literacy Center



in Colorado Springs. The Lewis-Palmer Middle School Builders Club (LPMSBC) and PRKC made another donation of more than 100 books to CLC. Many young children end up reading below their age level because they have no books of their own at home. CLC works with families and the community to provide an effective literacy program for struggling readers in grades 1-3. Each student gets personalized one-on-one tutoring. To donate or become a tutor, contact Tri-Lakes Senior Center Coordinator Rachel Morin at 610-246-1047. In the photo, Morin thanks PRKC President Todd Osborn and Elliot Beagley of Lewis-Palmer Middle School Bear Creek for their contributions. Photo by Dean Snow.

Left: The Palmer Ridge Key Club (PRKC) and Monument Hill Kiwanis Club (MHKC) donated more than 300 books and \$650 for Tri-Lakes Children's Literacy Center (CLC) on March 20. The money was raised during sponsorship nights at Arlene's Beans in Monument and Mod Pizza

Emergency Preparedness



Right: Students at Palmer Ridge High School helped organize an Emergency Preparedness Symposium on April 8. Several organizations that deal with emergencies like wildfires and disasters that might call for evacuation or "shelter in place" described the parameters for deciding proper responses. Christopher Gonzales, commander of the El Paso County Sheriff's Office, has responded to many types of emergencies in our county. He described how decisions are made about addressing various emergencies, including traffic flow, first responder access, reverse 911 calls, and more. He suggested all county residents sign up for the reverse 911 service by logging into "Peak Alerts" at <https://www.elpasoteller911.org/246/Peak-Alerts>. A presentation by Lisa Hatfield and André Mouton of the Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church Emergency Preparedness Group (EPG) described how the group has helped Tri-Lakes residents "harden" their homes against wildfires. The process includes removing flammable materials from within 5 feet of your home, eliminating "laddering" vegetation, e.g., tall grass to Gambel oak to pines, preventing an ember storm from entering through vents in the eaves of your home, and other preventive measures. Photo by Steve Pate.

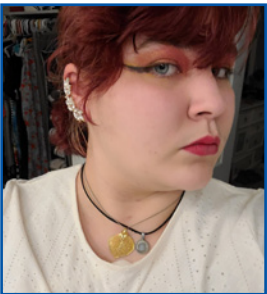
TLWC named Non-Profit of the Year

Right: Tri-Lakes Women's Club (TLWC) has been named Non-Profit of the Year by the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce. TLWC was honored by the chamber at its annual awards dinner on April 14. TLWC earned the honor for its accomplishments and contributions to the Tri-Lakes community. Accepting the award were members Charlie Ann Hayes, left, and Ann Cook. Photo courtesy of Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce.



Cotton wins PLAG scholarship

Right: Each year, the Palmer Lake Art Group awards Art Scholarships to District 38 graduating seniors who have demonstrated serious commitment to art, intend to continue art studies, and plan for a profession with the visual arts. Isabelle Cotton, graduating senior at Palmer Ridge High School, was awarded the 2023 art scholarship of \$2,500. Isabelle will attend Temple University, Japan Campus in the fall. Photo provided by the Palmer Lake Arts Group.



Gleneagle Egg Hunt



Above: On April 8, the Antelope Trails Elementary (ATE) School field was filled with Easter colors as over 6,000 plastic eggs were spread across it for the Gleneagle Easter Egg Hunt. The plastic eggs contained hard candy, bubble gum, bouncy balls, and other treats. Blair Dinkins, who lives adjacent to ATE, coordinated the hunt in partnership with the school. She is a realtor with the Colorado Team, a residential real estate agency that sponsored the event. She and other agency employees set up and conducted the event. Dinkins said, “We (the agency) wanted to bring something fun to the neighborhood for Easter.” The children were divided into three age groups with each assigned a different part of the field and then, at the sound of a horn, proceeded with the egg gathering simultaneously. There were also giveaways, food and coffee trucks, and free donuts. *Photo by David Futey.*

Lewis-Palmer HS Concert



Above: In preparation for the Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA) band competition, Lewis-Palmer High School (LPHS) presented its Symphonic Band, Wind Symphony, and Small Ensemble concert on April 11. Tom Chapman, who directed the Symphonic Band, will leave LPHS after this academic year and will direct a final concert on May 9. The Small Ensemble included flutes, clarinets, trumpets, low brass, percussion, a woodwind choir, double woodwind quintet, and a brass choir. The small ensembles performed “on their own” without direction. *Photo by Steve Pate.*

Station 4 Push-In Ceremony



Above: Above: Monument Fire District staff and residents “push-in” the new Pierce Engine 514 at Station 4 in Gleneagle on April 29. Monument Mayor Mitch LaKind, Monument Fire District staff, board directors and residents gathered at the station on Gleneagle Drive to push in the 2023 Pierce Engine 514 and squad car 575, the first of its kind in the district. The ceremony of “pushing-in” apparatus harkens back to the 1800s, when fire departments used horse-drawn steamer engines to put out fires. After fighting the fire, crews would ready the horses in the stable for the next call, but because horses will not walk backward when they are under load, crews would push the apparatus back into narrow station bays. The time-honored tradition continues nationwide, whenever a department is lucky to receive new apparatus. *Photo By Natalie Barszcz.*

FOMP Trail Night



Above:About 50 people showed up for the first Friends of Monument Preserve (FOMP) Trail Night of the season on April 11. Participation was greater than normal due to local concern about recent wildfire mitigation by the Pikes Peak Ranger District of the U.S. Forest Service in the Monument Preserve. Many trails were covered by debris from the “mastication” of Gambel oak groves and most vegetation under 6 inches in diameter. Brian Mullin, FOMP president, split the participants into small groups to clear debris from trails. Future trail nights will be on the second Tuesday of each month May through September, 6-8 p.m., and 5-7 p.m. the second Tuesday in October. Anyone is welcome to help build and maintain trails on these dates by simply showing up or by checking the FOMP website, www.fomp.org, for more details and other workdays. On a hike through the preserve a week later, April 18, the trails were in good shape—at least visible—and hikers and mountain bikers were out enjoying a nice day. *Photo by Steve Pate.*

Friends of Fox Run Park

Right: Members of Friends of Fox Run Park (FoFRP) helped clean the roadsides April 13 in Fox Run Park Regional Park near the dog park for Earth Day Week. Pictured from left are Dave Futey, Steve Jeroslow, and Linda Davies. There are several days scheduled to work with the park employees to clean up and help work on projects such as trail maintenance and fence repair. Contact FoFRP at friendsoffoxrun-park@gmail.com for more information. *Photo by Julie Haverluk.*



Sertoma fallen officer donation



Above: Gleneagle Sertoma Club donated \$10,000 to the family of fallen Fountain police officer Julian Becerra (pictured in the background) on March 22. Becerra died after falling off a bridge while chasing a carjacking suspect on Feb. 2. Club President Larry Oliver presented the check to, from left, Fountain police officer John Kay, Colorado Springs Police Protective Association/Southern Colorado Law Enforcement Foundation Executive Director Sherryl Dillon, and Colorado Springs police officer Patrick David. Sertoma member Pete Peterson paid a moving tribute to Becerra and all first responders at the club’s recent Business and Pleasure event at Beasts and Brews in Colorado Springs. *Photo by Dr. Vicki Wynn.*

Eric Elison at TLCA

Right: On April 15, the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA) hosted singer/songwriter Eric Elison and his Gordon Lightfoot Tribute Band. Elison, known as The Lightfoot of the Rockies, captivated the audience at this sold-out show with known and lesser-known Lightfoot songs along with a few of his originals. They performed Lightfoot songs included Early Morning Rain, a song that Lightfoot said was his "first best song," If You Could Read My Mind, Sundown, The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald, Song for a Winter's Night written in Cleveland in the summer, Carefree Highway and Christian Island. The band also performed Elison's Worthy of You, a tribute to his wife of 44 years. Elison, playing six- and 12-string guitars, was accompanied by highly accomplished musicians Frank Sanchez (electric bass), Matt Podschweit (keyboard), Dina Hollingsworth (flute) and KJ Braithwaite (lead guitar). Note: This concert happened two weeks before Lightfoot's death at age 84. He died May 1. Information on upcoming events at the TLCA is at trilakesarts.org. *Photo by David Futey.*



TLC appreciates MHKC

Right: Tri-Lakes Cares (TLC) has shown its appreciation for the help it's gotten from the Monument Hill Kiwanis Club (MHKC). From left, MHKC President Greg Bielanski accepted a certificate of appreciation



from TLC Development Specialist Christine Bucher and Executive Director Haley Chapin on April 15. Each year, MHKC conducts three major events that benefit TLC. They are Empty Bowls, with support from D38, in October, Harvest of Love, planned and executed by Service Leadership Programs in all D38 Schools in November, and the North Pole Craft Fair in December. These events raise more than \$20,000 and about six tons of food each year. *Photo by Warren Gerig.*

TLWC donates to first responders



Left: Members of Tri-Lakes Women's Club (TLWC) delivered over \$800 worth of gift cards to area fire, police, and EMS workers to thank them for all of the work they do to keep our community safe. TLWC members also delivered the gift cards and baked goods to the Pike Interagency Hot-shot Crew on April 15. From left are TLWC member Judy Sawyer, Monument Police Sgt. Michael Case, and TLWC member Sandra Sciadini. *Photo by Deborah Braun.*

Alpine Essentials Ribbon-Cutting



Above: Members of the Woodward family attended a ribbon-cutting in front of their marijuana dispensary Alpine Essentials in Palmer Lake on April 19. Brother and sister co-owners Melissa and Tyler Woodward, their mother and co-owner Brenda and Tyler's wife, Sarah, who manages the shop, were at the ceremony sponsored by the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce. Melissa said the ceremony was part of a "great journey" the family has been on. "It feels incredible," she said. The Woodward family has been in Palmer Lake for four generations. Alpine Essentials first opened as a medical dispensary eight years ago. They officially added recreational sales on April 1. Their shop is one of two recreational dispensaries in Palmer Lake. The other is Dead Flowers, which also sells medical marijuana. Voters passed recreational sales last November by 55% to 45% in an effort to alleviate the town's financial troubles. In the photo are, from left, starting with Melissa Woodward in yellow, Brenda, Brenda's daughter-in-law Sarah, and Sarah's husband Tyler. *Photo by Michael Weinfeld.*

D20 Community Garden



Above: Some of the D20 Community Garden volunteers engaged in the spring cleanup of the D20 Community Garden on a sunny Saturday morning April 29 at Antelope Trails Elementary School. Tia Guillan of Academy District 20 led a team of about 30 volunteers from Antelope Trails Elementary fifth-grade student leadership, I Love Colorado Springs-City Serve, Woodmen Valley Chapel members, Discovery Canyon Campus High School National Honor Society, staff members, and families. The students annually plant strawberries, pumpkins, and sunflowers to line the fence in late summer, and each grade level tends a planter with a variety of plants throughout the growing season. The large team of volunteers prepares the community garden and the landscaping features in both spring and fall. *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*

100+ Women Who Care

Right: At the bi-annual meeting of the 100+ Women Who Care Tri-Lakes, three presentations were given by local nonprofits Tri-Lakes Cares, Friends of Fox Run Park, and Monument Warriors as to why they should be voted on and awarded a grant from the group. Each woman member writes a \$100 check to the nonprofit that was voted to win. Monument Warriors, pictured, won the spring event on April 19. With over 45 women in attendance, over \$4,500 was given to the Monument Warriors that night, and the other women could mail a check to the winner. *Photo by Marlene Brown.*



DCC Concert



Above: On April 25, the Discovery Canyon Campus (DCC) high school bands and orchestras of the Instrumental Music Program performed a Spring Concert for a capacity audience of parents and friends in the DCC high school theater. Among the music performed, Instrumental Music Teacher Kevin Whitelaw directed the Jazz Ensemble performing Blue Monk by Thelonious Monk, the String Orchestra performing Rhythmos by Kathryn Griesinger, and the Symphonic Band with music from How to Train Your Dragon. The Concert Band, directed by Jack Yonce, performed Renaissance Suite by Tielman Susato. For the finale, Whitelaw directed the combined bands and orchestras for music from The Incredibles by Michael Giacchino. Before the performance, the program held its end-of-year banquet, where Outstanding Classman, Hemiola, National Band, orchestra and jazz awards were announced. *Photo by David Futey.*

Tri-Lakes Cares Garden



Above Students from Palmer Ridge High School have been helping with the Tri-Lakes Cares (TLC) fresh food garden. Volunteers are welcome throughout the growing season, which is especially important through the summer. Contact JanetSellers@ocn.me for more information. *Photo provided by Janet Sellers.*

An important message for our readers
OCN needs your help!

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

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

- Reporters. Reporting on local meetings, what

- they talked about and what they decided.
- Mailing assistants. Counting and lifting tubs of papers to take the monthly mailing to the post offices and stacks of papers to local businesses, loading and unloading mailing tubs from a truck at two locations, preparing postoffice paperwork, tub labels, subscription labels, etc.
- Drivers. Driving a rental truck to various post offices once a month.
- Ad sales assistants. We need volunteers who love OCN to contact local businesses and encourage them to advertise in OCN.

The time and skills involved vary greatly from job to

job. OCN will provide whatever equipment and training you need.

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

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

Our Community Notices

By Janet Sellers

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

Student community garden volunteers

Monument Community Garden will have some openings for student gardening volunteers starting in May. Tasks include preparing garden beds, weeding, sowing seeds and developing the compost sector. Bring gardening gloves, some tools will be provided at the work days by other volunteers. Besides tasks, there will be a short information and skills demonstration each 2-3 hour session. Contact Janet Sellers at JanetSellers@ocn.me for more information.

MVEA outage notifications

Please add your phone number to your MVEA account to streamline outage reporting and restoration notifications. To report an outage please call or text "OUT" to (800) 388-9881. Visit MVEA's Outage Center before the storm. There is information about preparing for outages, electrical safety, outage reporting, a link to the outage map, and more.

Slash/mulch program

Slash drop off through **Sep. 10**, (\$2/load). Free mulch pick up **May 13-Sep. 16**. Hours: Tue. & Thu. 5-7:30 pm, Sat. 7 am-4 pm, Sun noon-4 pm. Mulch loader Sat. (\$5/2 cubic yards). Located in Black Forest, Herring and Shoup roads. Volunteers needed for shifts. Info: www.bfslash.org.

Trail Repair Volunteers Needed

Friends of Monument Preserve (FOMP) needs volunteers to help repair the trails in the National Forest Open Space surrounding the Monument Fire Center. The Forest Service recently completed the second phase of Fire Mitigation work and many of the social trails have been damaged. The Forest Service relies on FOMP to maintain these trails. Trail Repair work days are scheduled on the second Tuesday of the month from April-October. Next meeting: Tue., **May 9**, 5 pm. Meet at the Mt. Herman trailhead off Mt. Herman Rd and Nursery Rd and bring gloves. Tools will be provided.

The safety stop is now state law

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

Neighborhood safety

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

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 (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.

County Trailability Program

A new program uses mobility vehicles to allow more people access to nature in ways previously inaccessible to them. Trail routes for each county nature center include the volunteers and staff, trained to accompany participants. Vehicle registrations can be made at the Nature Center May 1-Oct. 31. Contact El Paso County Regional Parks programs: Mary J Lewis at Bear Creek, or Jessica Miller at Fountain Creek, <https://communityservices.elpasoco.com/trailability/>.

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 Client Programs, at 719-481-4864 Ext. 111.

Senior Beat newsletter—subscribe for free

Each monthly Senior Beat newsletter is full of information for local seniors, including the daily menu of the senior lunches offered Monday through Friday at the Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Highway 105, Palmer Lake. It also contains the schedule of the classes and events for the month at the Senior Citizens Center and senior

friendly library programs. To subscribe, send an email with your name and mailing address to SeniorBeat@TriLakesSeniors.org. Senior Beat can also be viewed online at www.TriLakesSeniors.org.

Can you volunteer today?

- **OCN needs your help.** See article above.
- **Links to local organizations** with an immediate need for volunteers are listed on the county's website, www.elpasocountyhealth.org/volunteering-and-donations, for groups like Care and Share, Crossfire Ministries, blood donations, Early Connections (volunteer from home opportunity), foster an animal, Medical Reserve Corps of El Paso County, Salvation Army, Silver Key, and United Way (ongoing opportunities).
- **The Colorado State University Extension office** in El Paso County has several opportunities for individuals interested in volunteering. <https://elpaso.extension.colostate.edu/volunteer-opportunities/>
- **El Paso County volunteer-based and nonprofit organizations** are committed to building healthy, caring communities and 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.americanantowns.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.epc-sheriffsoffice.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>.
- **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 pm, and our Summer Session will run through Aug. 14. For more information, to become a volunteer tutor or to enroll your child, visit www.childrensliteracycenter.org or email Christine Jeffson at Christine@childrensliteracycenter.org.

Our Community Calendar

By Janet Sellers

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

GOVERNMENTAL BODIES

- **Forest Lakes Metropolitan District, Pinon Pines Metropolitan District 1, 2 & 3 board meeting.** Typically meets quarterly on the first **Mon.**, 4 pm Meetings are held via teleconference. For virtual joining instructions and updates see www.forestlakesmetrodistrict.com.

- **El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) regular meeting,** usually every **Tue.**, 9 am. BOCC land use meetings are being held every first and third Tuesday of the month as needed at 1 pm. View agendas and meetings at www.agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso. Meetings are held at Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade Ave., Suite 150, Colo. Springs. Info: 719-520-6430.
- **Monument Town Council meeting,** **Mon., May 1, & 15**, 6:30 pm, Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Normally meets first and third Mon. Info: 719-884-801, www.townofmonument.org/260/Board-of-Trustees for remote attendance links.

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- **Palmer Lake Board of Adjustments**, Tue., **May 2**, 5 pm, 28 Valley Crescent St., Palmer Lake. Normally meets first Tues., as needed.
- **El Paso County Planning Commission meeting**, Thu., **May 4 & 18**, 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>.
- **Woodmoor Water & Sanitation District board meeting**, Mon., **May 8**, 1 pm, 1845 Woodmoor Dr., Monument. Normally meets second Mon. Info: 719-488-2525, www.woodmoorwater.com.
- **Lewis-Palmer School District 38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee** (formerly DAAC), On **summer hiatus** until October. Usually meets monthly on second **Tue.**, 6-8 pm, Monument. For details, meeting site, see <https://www.lewispalmer.org/Page/2#calendar> Contact info: tmckee@lewispalmer.org.
- **Tri-Lakes Wastewater Facility Joint Use Committee meeting**, Tue., **May 9**, 10 am 16510 Mitchell Ave. Meets second Tue. Info: See <https://tlwastewater.com/index.html> Bill Burks, 719-481-4053.
- **Palmer Lake Sanitation District board meeting**, Wed., **May 10**, 9 am, call-in only: 650-479-3208, Access Code 76439078, 120 Middle Glenway. Meets second Wed. Info: 719-481-2732. www.plsd.org.
- **Monument Planning Commission meeting**, Wed., **May 10**, 6 pm Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Meets second Wed. To see the options for remote public participation in each meeting, visit www.townofmonument.org/263/Planning-Commission-Board-of-Adjustment. Info: 719-884-8028. www.townofmonument.org.
- **Palmer Lake Board of Trustees meeting**, Thu., **May 11 & 25**, 5 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent, Usually meets second and fourth Thu. Info: 719-481-2953. www.townofpalmerlake.com.
- **Lewis-Palmer School District 38 board meeting**, Mon., **May 15**, 6-10 pm. Normally meets third Mon. This meeting of the Board of Education will be live-streamed on the district's YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/LPSDCommunity, agenda, supporting documents at <https://go.boarddocs.com/co/lewispalmer/Board.nsf/vpublic>. Contact Vicki Wood. Phone: 719.481.9546 Email: vwood@lewispalmer.org Website: <https://www.lewispalmer.org>.
- **Monument Sanitation District board meeting**, Wed., **May 17**, 9 am, 130 Second St. Zoom meeting. Find joining instructions on the website. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-4886, www.colorado.gov/msd.
- **Palmer Lake Town Planning Commission meeting**, Wed., **May 17**, 6 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-2953, www.townofpalmerlake.com.
- **Academy Water and Sanitation District board meeting**, Wed., **May 17**, 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>.
- **Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District board meeting**, in person or via Zoom, Wed., **May 17**, 7 pm, Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining instructions at www.bffire.org or contact Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn at 719-495-4300. Meetings are usually held on the third Wednesday.
- **El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority meeting**, Thu., **May 18**, 9 am Monument Town Hall Boardroom, 645 Beacon Lite Rd. Meets third Thu. Info: 719-488-3603. www.loopwater.org.
- **Donala Water & Sanitation District board meeting**, Thu., **May 18**, 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.
- **Triview Metropolitan District board meeting**, Thu., **May 18**, 5:30 pm, 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302, Monument. Normally meets third Thu. Info: 719-488-6868, www.triviewmetro.com.
- **Monument Academy School Board meeting**, Thu., **May 18**, 6 pm at the East Campus. 4303 Pinehurst Circle. Meets second Thu. Info 719-481-1950, <https://www.monumentacademy.net/school-board/board-meeting-minutes/>.
- **Woodmoor Improvement Association Board Meeting**, Wed., **May 24**, 7 pm, Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. The WIA Board normally meets fourth Wed. Info: 719-488-2693, www.woodmoor.org.
- **Monument Fire District board meeting**, in person or via Zoom, Wed., **May 24** , 6:30 pm., Station 1, 18650 Highway 105, Monument. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining instructions at <http://www.monumentfire.org>, or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin, at 719-484-0911. Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday.
- **Donald Wescott fire protection district meeting**, Meets every other month on the fourth **Wed.** The next meeting is **May 24**, 4:30 pm, Station 1, 18650 Highway 105 Monument. Find updates and zoom meeting joining instructions at <http://www.monumenfire.org> or contact Jennifer Martin, at 719-484-0911.

WEEKLY & MONTHLY EVENTS

- **Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO) meeting**, Sat., **May 13**, 10 am–12 pm., Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. HOA legal topics. Members of local HOAs welcome. Usually meets bi-monthly (Jan., Mar., May, July, Sep., Nov.) on the second Sat. of the month. 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. See ad on page 3.
- **Monument Hill Kiwanis Club meeting**, every **Sat.**, 8 am. www.MHKiwanis.org, MonumentHillKiwanis@gmail.com for details, guests are welcome. Service leadership clubs, Key clubs, Builders Club and K-kids at D38 schools. Memberships open to the public. Info: RF Smith, 719-210-4987, www.MHKiwanis.org. See ad on page 3.
- **Neighborhood Net Ham Radio**, every **Sat.**, 10 am Amateur ham radio operators practice for emergencies on weekly repeater nets so neighbors can help neighbors. Sign up at www.mereowx.org/neighborhood-net or contactus@mereowx.org.
- **Palmer Lake Art Group**, second **Sat.** A variety of art programs are offered after the social gathering and business meeting. Guests welcome. 300 Hwy 105, NE corner of I-25 and 105. 9:30 am. Info: 719-460-4179, www.palmerlakeartgroup.com.
- **Lions Club Bingo**, every **Sat.** (except the first Sat.), 8:30 am-1 pm and first Mon., 5:30-10 pm Tri-Lakes Lions Club's portion of the proceeds benefit those in need in the Tri-Lakes community. Updated info and location: Jim Naylor, 719-481-8741 or www.trilakeslionsclub.org.
- **Tri-Lakes Parkinson's Disease Support Group**, third **Sat.**, 10 am-noon, Monument Community Presbyterian Church, 238 Third St., Monument. Info: Syble Krafft, 719-488-2669; Barry (group president), 719-351-9485. If you need any help, please call Syble or Barry.
- **Benet Hill Monastery**, Let us pray with you, walk in the forest, come up and visit prayer sites, every **Sun.** worship is 10:15 am, 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. Watch live or replay: www.facebook.com/tlumc, www.youtube.com/tlumc.org. Info: 719-488-1365, www.tlumc.org. 20256 Hunting Downs Way, Monument. See ad on page 2.
- **Fuel Church** Sunday Service, every **Sun.** Service times, 11:00 am Live service streaming at www.fuelchurch.org at 11:40 am on www.fuelchurch.org. Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Nursery and kids' service. Non-denominational, spirit-filled. Need prayer? Email us info@fuel.org. See ad on page 7.
- **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. See ad on page 6.
- **German Conversation Group**, every **Mon.**, 1:30 pm, Monument Library, 1706 Woodmoor Drive. Public welcome with Intermediate to Advanced German speaking skills.
- **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/.
- **Old Fashioned Community Sing-along**. First and third **Mon.** 5:30 to 6:30 pm Black Forest Community Church 6845 Shoup Rd. Come share the joy of singing old, familiar, catchy tunes just for fun. For details: kay@stricklan.net.
- **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
- **La Leche League** breastfeeding support group, 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.

- **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.childreosliteracycenter.org or contact Rachel Morin, Tri-Lakes Senior Center Coordinator, CLC 610-246-1047 (cell).
- **Centering Prayer Group** at Benet Hill Monastery, every **Tue.**, 10-11 am. All vaccinated guests are welcome. Contact Sister Therese at (719) 355-1638 or (719) 355-1650 or stherese@benethillmonastery.org.
- **Essentrics Fitness Program** at Senior Center, every **Tue.**, 9 am & **Thu.**, 10 am, Grace Best Education Center, 66 Jefferson St, Monument, CO 80132. Registration & info: Sue Walker, 719-330-0241, www.trilakes-seniors.org.
- **Friends of Monument Preserve (FOMP) Trail Repair** monthly Work Days, second **Tue.** Apr.-Oct. October, Work Days 5-7 pm. May-Sept. Work Days 6-8 pm. Meet at Mt Herman Trailhead at the corner of Mt Herman Rd and Nursery Rd, bring gloves. FOMP needs volunteers to help repair the trails in the National Forest Open Space surrounding the Monument Fire Center. The Forest Service recently completed the second phase of Fire Mitigation work and many of the social trails have been damaged. The Forest Service relies on FOMP to maintain these trails. Next meeting: Tues., May 9, 5:00 pm. Tools will be provided.
- **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.
- **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. Reservations requested: 719-884 2300. Check the Silver Key @ Tri-Lakes website for events and schedules, <https://www.silverkey.org/tri-lakes-events/>.
- **Colorado Springs Philharmonic Guild Listening Club**, third **Wed.** Free virtual event. Maestro Wilson will conduct monthly hour-long programs. RSVP at www.cspguild.org.
- **Gleneagle Sertoma**, first and third **Wed.**, 11:45 am to 1 pm at Beasts and Brews, 7 Spectrum Loop, Colorado Springs. The longest continuously serving civic service organization in northern El Paso County features a program speaker addressing local topics of interest. Duane Gritzmaker, dwgritz@gmail.com or 719-649-9220.
- **Senior Social**, fourth **Wed.**, 12455 Black Forest Rd. Info: www.aarpchapter1100blackforest.weekly.com.
- **Tri-Lakes Church of Christ** Wednesday night fellowship classes, every **Wed.**, 6-7:30 pm, 20450 Beacon Lite Road, Monument (corner of Beacon Lite & County Line Roads). Info: 719-488-9613, gregsmith@trilakeschurch.org, www.trilakeschurch.org.
- **Tri-Lakes Cruisers**, first **Wed.**, 7 pm. A nonprofit car club. Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce community room, with numerous activities and events each month. Club membership applications are now being accepted and are available on the website: <https://tl-cruisers.weebly.com> .
- **AARP Black Forest #1100**, second **Wed.**, noon. All ages welcome. In-person, Black Forest Lutheran Church, 12455 Black Forest Rd.
- **Senior Bingo**, third **Wed.** Silver Alliance Senior Center, Space is limited to 16 participants. RSVP & info: Sue Walker, 719-464-6873, or email sue@monumentalfitness.
- **Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7829**, third **Wed.**, 7 pm, Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce community room, 166 2nd St., Monument. New members welcome. Info: Post Commander and POC Bruce Beyerly, Bruce.Beyerly@gmail.com.
- **VFW Auxiliary to Post 7829**, third **Wed.**, 7 pm, The Country Club at Woodmoor, 18945 Pebble Beach Way, Monument. Guests are welcome to join; contact carlsonmkc@aol.com for instructions on how to connect. If you are a relative of a veteran who served on foreign soil during war or other military action, you may be eligible. Info: Kathy Carlson, 719-488-1902, carlsonmkc@aol.com.
- **Pikes Peak Genealogical Society**, Wed., **May 10**, 6:30pm hangout begins. & pm meeting begins. Program: Claire Brisson-Banks.Guests are welcome to attend the meeting via Zoom. Please request an invitation from the PPGS President@PPGS.org.
- **Al-anon Meeting**: Monument, 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**, **Thu.**, **May 18**, meeting, 7 pm, doors open at 6:30 pm. Usually meets third Thu. Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent St. <https://palmerdividehistory.org>
 - **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.
 - **Tri-Lakes Women's Club** (TLWC) monthly meeting, third **Fri.**, **May 19**, 11:30 am,. Location: Falcon Club, USAFA. Meetings are open to all members of fun-competitive “70's-Themed” Trivia Game, and enjoy being together before our summer break and applaud our achievements To become a member, or learn about the club, visit our website at www.tlwc.net. net Contact Info: Tri-Lakes Women's Club membership@tlwc.net
 - **Senior Book Club**, second **Fri.**, 11 am-noon, Silver Alliance Senior Center, all are welcome. Coffee & snacks served. RSVP & info: Sue, 719-330-0241.
 - **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.
 - **Monument Dementia Caregiver Support Group**, 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.
 - **Tri-Lakes Monument radio Association**, Details: Contact Bob Witte, 719-659-3727.

SPECIAL EVENTS

- **VOLUNTEER TODAY! Our Community News mailing day**, **Thu.**, **May 4 & June 1**, approx. 9 am–2 pm. We are all volunteers at OCN and need YOUR help, even for an hour two, getting the papers ready to mail. Contact AllenAlchian@ocn.me to sign up and get the address and exact times.
- **Pikes Peak YMCA, pool season pass**, early bird pricing. See ad on page 6.
- **AR Workshop**, summer camp, www.arworkshop.com/coloradosprings. See ad on page 5.
- **Make It Work Clinic 3D printers and PCs**, **May 6 & 13**, 9 am-noon, **June 2**, 12:30 pm-3 pm. If you are having a problem with your 3D Printer, drop by to see if we can help get you back up and running. FREE. Donations appreciated. We are gauging interest on helping community members with their PCs, please email us if interested. enable@monumentallimpact.org. 55 Adams St in Downtown Monument.
- **Covered Treasures Bookstore**, **Sat.**, **May 6**, 11-1 pm, Sandra Dallas signs her *Where Coyotes Howl*. **Sat.**, **May 13**, 1-3 pm, Dr. Lindsey Larsen signs her *Meeting Exceptional Friends*; Lindsay Mello signs her *The Dream Fairy*. **Thu.**, **May 18**, 5-8 pm (First Art Hop of the season), Stephanie Kane signs her *True Crime Redux* and Mike Torreano signs his *White Sands Gold*. 105 Second Street, Monument, 719-481-2665.
- **Peter Pan**, Ent Center for the Arts, **Sun.**, **May 7**.
- **GameCon XVI**, **Sat. May 6**, 8 am-5pm, Cost: \$15. A tabletop gaming convention for students in grades 6 - 12 in the Pikes Peak region. Janitell Junior High School,7635 Fountain Mesa Rd. Fountain CO 80817 . D20 GameCon is a non-profit teachers organization, info: <http://www.gamecon.info>.
- **Western Museum of Mining and Industry Lecture**, **Tue.**, **May 9**, 4 pm, members free, \$5 nonmembers; *Easy hikes to the hidden past: Pikes Peak region*. www.wmmi.org. See ad on page 8.
- **Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce, Networking**,

- Tue.**, **May 9**, 5 pm–7:00 pm, members free, \$15 for non-members. Details: www.trilakeschamber.com. 719-481-3282.
- **Taste of Tri-Lakes Cares**, tickets for an evening of food and fun **Tues.**, **May 9**, 5:30 pm.
 - **Western Museum of Mining and Industry Family Days**: **Sat.**, **May 13**, **Thu.**, **June 1**, \$5/carload. STEaM camps: **June 19-23**, **July 17-21**. See ad on page 8.
 - **McCord's Garden Center and Landscaping**, Special offers through **May 15**. . See ad on page 4.
 - **D38 Spring Community Connection** with Superintendent Dr. KC Somers, **Tue.**, **May 16**, 1 pm at Bennies. See ad on page 13.
 - **Art Hop**, **Thu.**, **May 18**, 5-8 pm, Downtown Monument. Every third **Thu.** May-Sep. Free. See ad on page 2.
 - **Monument Hill Farmers Market**, every **Sat.**, starting, **May 20**. 8 am to 2 pm. 66 Jefferson Street Monument. See ad on page 5.
 - **YMCA summer day camp**, starts **Tue.**, **May 30**, Info: www.ppyymca.org/daycamp. See ad on page 6.
 - **Krueger Brothers** Full-service Exterior General Contractor, Scott Northway 719-466-1676. . See ad on page 32.
 - **Concerts in the park**, every **Wed.**, **May 31-Aug. 9**, 6:30 to 8:30 pm. Limbach Park. See ad on page 18.
 - **A Better Hearing Center**, special offers through **May 31**. 574 East Highway 105 Monument.
 - **Affordable Flooring Connection**, special offers through **May 31**. see ad on page 2.
 - **Cornerstone Cleaners**, special offers through **May 31**. 1030 W. Baptist Road, near King Soopers. See ad on page 4.
 - **Eagle Wine & Spirits**, special offers through **May 31**. Baptist Road next to King Soopers. See ad on page 3.
 - **Gleneagle Candle Co.**, special offers through **May 31**. 13796 Gleneagle Drive 80921. See ad on page 4.
 - **Monument Cleaners**, special offers through **May 31**, 15932 Jackson Creek Pkwy., in Monument Marketplace. See ad on page 5.
 - **Monumental Med Spa**, special offers for Mother's Day and gift cards in May. See ad on page 7.
 - **MVEA Annual meeting** of members **Thu.**, **June 8**, Dinner and door prizes. 10255 Lambert Road Falcon Colorado visit www.nvea.coop/annual-meeting
 - **Noel Relief Centers**, new patient specials. 950 Baptist Rd #130, Monument. See ad on page 7.
 - **Pikes Peak Brewing Company**, pop up Smokehouse **Fri. and Sat.** until it's gone. 1756 Lake Woodmoor Dr., Monument. See ad on page 2.
 - **The Living Room Plants**, special offers through **May 31**, 12229 Voyager Pkwy, Suite 100. See ad on page 5.
 - **The Vanity Box**, Special offers, Mother's Day, and more. See ad on page 3 .
 - **Tri-Lakes Collision and Auto Service Center**, special offers through **May 31**. 2101 Wolf Court, Monument. www.trilakescollision.com. See ad on page 5.
 - **Color splash art show** 2023, **Thu.**, **June 1** through **Wed. June 28**, Opening reception **Fri.**, **June 2**, 6:30 pm. Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts 304 Highway 105 Palmer Lake.
 - **Church at Woodmoor 50th Jubilee events**, **Sun.**, **June 4** - a BBQ, **Sun.**, **June 11** - sculpture unveiling and time capsule, **Sun.**, **June 18** - strawberries and ice cream. Church at Woodmoor, 18125 Furrow Rd, Monument.
 - **Summer dance session, June 5-21**. A time to dance. See ad on page 5.
 - **Jackson Creek Community garage sale**, **Fri.-Sat.**,

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.

- June 16-17**, Contact Frances at 719-200-7387.
- **Front Range Maker's Market**, **Sat.**, **June 17**, 8:30 am-3 pm. Lewis-Palmer High School. Outdoors. Free, 90+ Artisan Makers, Boutiques & Food Trucks Info: www.Frmakersmarket.com. See ad on page 2.
 - **Tri-Lakes Church of Christ**, Vacation Bible School, **Mon.-Thu.**, **June 26-29**. See ad on page 14.

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.

Look for our next issue
Saturday, June 3

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

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



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Support Our Community.
Volunteer with OCN!

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 John Heiser, Publisher, at (719) 488-3455, or email johnheiser@ocn.me to see how you can contribute. Contact us today!

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



Thank you!
to all those who fought for our county. Please ask me about our hero's program!

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