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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 26-27 for event locations and other details of these and many other local events.

- OCN mailing days, Thu., Aug. 3 & 31, approx. 9 am-2 pm.
- Hummingbird Festival, Fri.-Sat., Aug. 4-5, 10 am-3 pm.
- WMMI Lecture, Tue., Aug. 8, 4-5 pm, Alexander Film Company of Colorado Springs;
- WMMI Family Day, Sat. Aug. 12, 10-3 pm.
- Trivia in the Park at Fox Run Regional Park. Wed. Aug. 9, 6 am-7:30 pm
- LAST 2023 Concert in the Park, Wed., Aug. 9, 6:30 to 8:30 pm. Limbach Park.
- Love shop, Restyle your furs event, Thu.-Fri., Aug. 10-11, 10 am-5 pm, 251 Front St. See ad on page 20.
- Kings Deer Community Garage Sale, Fri.-Sun., Aug. 11-13. See ad on page 5.
- 24th annual Free Community Pig Roast, Fri., Aug. 11, 5:30-7:30 pm. See ad on page 8.
- Customers must pick up peaches ordered through Kiwanis, Sat., Aug. 12, 10 am- 2 pm. Bear Creek Elementary, 1330 Creekside.
- Art Hop, Thu., Aug 17, 5-8 pm. See ad on page 2.
- Dance performance auditions, Sat., Aug. 19. See ad on page 5.
- Benet Hill Monastery, Earth Day in August. Sat., Aug. 26, 9 am-1:30 pm. See ad on page 3.
- Pikes Peak Brewing John Denver Tribute, Sun., Aug. 27, 1-4 p.m. See ad on page 2.
- Labor Day weekend art festival: Sat.-Mon., Sep. 2-4, 10-5 pm. See ad on page 9.

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Above: The Western Museum of Mining & Industry (WMMI) held its Family Day with a focus on industry on July 15. Family Day attendees learned how to pan gold with assistance from members of the Gold Prospectors of Colorado, traveled around the museum property on a tractor-pulled hayride, and witnessed the operation of the museum's 1920 Osgood steam shovel, H.K. Porter Trammer, EIMCO 630 rocker mucker, and Yellow Jacket Stamp Mill. There were also blacksmith demonstrations, Monument Fire District engines on display, and a chance to pet and learn about alpacas. The last WMMI Family Day of the summer will be on Aug. 12 with a focus on history. Information on WMMI and its upcoming events is at www.wmmi.org. *Photo by David Futey.*

Monument Academy School Board, June 27

MA holds town hall on navigating gender issues

By Jackie Burhans

The Monument Academy (MA) board held a special meeting June 27, after the publication deadline for the July issue of Our Community News, on navigating gender issues. The Town Hall was attended by all seated board members except for outgoing board member Michael Geers. Also in attendance were the interim Chief Operating Officer Kim McClelland and MA's legal counsel Brad Miller.

The community Town Hall was attended by around 200 parents, teachers, administrators, and community members, many of whom spoke on the matter. State Rep. Don Wilson, R-Monument, was in attendance along with former Rep. Tim Geitner. The meeting ended with the unanimous adoption of a resolution regarding the privacy and protection of students.

GENDER ISSUES (Cont. on 6)

Above: At a special Town Hall meeting of the Monument Academy (MA) board, parents heard from the board and its legal counsel on how to navigate gender issues surrounding transgender students. Nearly 200 people attended, with many speaking in support during public comment. The board unanimously passed a resolution affirming its support for state and federal anti-discrimination laws as well as family and student privacy laws while saying that such laws harmed students who should report their discomfort with transgender students to authorities, that staff should alert the community to the presence of transgender students, and that parents should sue the parents of transgender students if they feel their child's right to privacy has been violated and should encourage their representatives to overturn such laws. Further, they resolved that transgender students must have the complete affirmation of their family units, must change their name and gender in all school records, and must dress as their chosen gender with "no vacillation." *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

OCN switches to larger format

By John Heiser, Publisher, OCN

Starting with our November 2001 issue, Our Community News has been printed on pages that are about 11 inches wide by about 17 inches long. This month, our pages are 11 inches wide by 21 inches long. Why the change?

Since 2016, OCN has been printed at the Pueblo Chieftain's printing plant in Pueblo. On June 13, Gannett, the owner of the Chieftain, abruptly announced that the Chieftain's printing plant will be permanently closed Aug. 13.

Publications being printed at that plant include five daily newspapers (Pueblo Chieftain, USA Today, Fort Collins Coloradoan, Rocky Ford Gazette, and the Trinidad Chronicle News), 46

weeklies, and 10 monthlies including OCN. The plant was averaging 76 print jobs per week requiring three shifts a day, six days a week, and employed more than 50 people.

Local options for printing OCN on the size paper we used before are very limited, so we had to switch to this larger format. This issue of OCN was printed by the Denver Post.

Despite the challenges of producing OCN as a print publication, our all-volunteer staff is dedicated to delivering detailed, accurate local news to more than 22,000 homes and businesses throughout the Tri-Lakes area every month. If you would like to help us do that, please contact me at johnheiser@ocn.me or 719-488-3455.

Monument Town Council, July 17

Annexation of Monument Ridge fails

By Chris Jeub

One Monument Town Council meeting was held in July, but it was as long as two as heated exchanges among developers, councilmembers, and neighbors lasted late into the night. The debate surrounded two subdivisions known as Monument Ridge West and East, 161 acres at the southwest and southeast corners of I-25 and County Line Road. This was their final step in their application for annexation into the town of Monument. Though their application was previously approved by the Planning Commission (see article on page 4) and supported by town staff, the Town Council overruled both and voted against annexation with a 2-5 vote. The developer withdrew its plans, and the future of Monument Ridge West and East now goes to El Paso County.

Background

Planning Director Shelia Booth presented the first resolution for annexation from El Paso County into Monument, known as Monument Ridge No. 1 West. The proposed annexation concerns a 90-acre area on the west side of I-25 south of County Line Road. While the town's Comprehensive Plan designates the area as Mixed Use, the applicant seeks to rezone it to Residential. Town staff supports this change, as the current housing density alongside the dedicated open space in Douglas County north of County Line Road does not warrant multi-use zoning.

The annexation agreement includes provisions for residential attached units but prohibits higher densities and multi-family housing. Despite initially facing a close vote of 3-4 against the proposal in the Planning Commission, it passed with a 4-3 vote when certain conditions were set. The zoning proposal was later approved by the Planning Commission with a vote of 6-1, and town staff recommended approval, emphasizing that annexation would allow the town to oversee the development and ensure alignment with the community vision of Monument's Comprehensive Plan.

MONUMENT (Cont. on 2)

MONUMENT (Cont. from 1)

Booth continued her presentation for the second resolution for annexation, known as Monument Ridge No. 2 East. This annexation was contingent upon the successful annexation of Monument Ridge No. 1 West. The proposed annexation area covers 71 acres and is intended for Residential zoning, accommodating about 383 dwell-

ing units. Additionally, the annexation proposal includes plans for a business campus south of the residential area, featuring office, research and development, and educational facilities (excluding manufacturing). As with the first resolution, the applicant's choice to propose residential zoning is due to the lack of sufficient resident numbers to support Mixed Use zoning. The Planning Commission approved the

proposal with a 6-1 vote, and town staff recommended approval.

Developer presentation

Development Manager Ray O'Sullivan presented the applicant's case for annexation. O'Sullivan began by explaining that the property owner was encouraged by the county to develop with Monument due to water availability. Initially the applicant considered simply paying for water service, but they were asked to explore annexation as an alternative. Working with the previous town staff, they devised a development plan that aligned with the town's preferences. However, when they presented this plan to the Planning Commission, they encountered significant community opposition, which left them "feeling unwelcome." O'Sullivan emphasized that the property was al-

ready zoned for their proposed development in the county, but their goal was to create a more pleasant community that residents would desire, rather than an eyesore. They were seeking RA zoning, but the commission recommended 2.5-acre lots, a suggestion O'Sullivan found unprecedented in his career. He expressed concern that without annexation, they would be left with no choice but to develop under county regulations.

Following O'Sullivan's presentation, project consultant David Whitehead of Whitehead Engineering delved into the technical aspects of the proposal. He highlighted the collaborative work they had undertaken with the town staff. However, Councilmember Steve King raised a significant concern about Slide 26 of the presentation, which indicated \$5.4 million in infrastructure fees. King doubted the ability for this to happen with unknowns surrounding future water developments (like the Loop system) still under review. Councilmember Marco Fiorito disagreed, viewing the \$5.4 million as a potential benefit, as it would provide the town with an influx of funds to purchase renewable water. He argued that even without annexation, the town would still need renewable water and that this presented a potential windfall. King remained cautious, emphasizing the uncertainty around the possibility of acquiring the necessary pipes to bring water into Monument. Fiorito stressed that without the funds from annexation, the town's water plans would remain stagnant.

King also expressed concern about the trees on the property and questioned the possibility of using or re-

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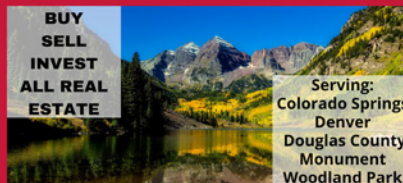
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locating them. In response, Whitehead explained that some trees needed to be removed for the health and safety of the community, a decision supported by the Fire Department. Whitehead presented slides detailing the trees, trails, and open spaces planned for the development, but King still had reservations about the number of trees and how the "majority of trees" would be determined.

King then questioned why the proposed densities in the development were higher than those allowed by the county, to which Booth responded that it didn't make economic sense to keep them lower. King suggested that the property might undergo a Planned Unit Development (PUD) process if annexation didn't happen, which could be a better option. He stated that, while it might not be what the applicant wanted to hear, he believed that the proposal was not in the best interests of the town.

Councilmember Kenneth Kimple and Mayor Mitch LaKind both inquired about the possibility of reducing the number of dwellings, but Whitehead stated that they were not willing to do so at the moment. Whitehead emphasized their commitment to open spaces and mentioned that the plan included funding for the town's parks. "I don't want your money," LaKind snapped, adding that he preferred to see parks included in the development rather than receiving money for them.

Throughout the exchange, King reiterated his primary concern about the trees on

the property, indicating that it was a crucial issue for him. The discussion highlighted various points of contention, including the proposed densities, park inclusion, and the fate of the existing trees on the property.

Community input mixed
Several individuals expressed their opposition to the proposed development during the meeting. The owner of Colorado Heights Camping Resort, which neighbors the

proposed development, worried about the potential closure of Monument Hill Road and the impact on his business, expressing fears of RVs navigating through the new neighborhood. Michael Barber, an architect and neighbor, criticized the insensitivity of the plans toward the existing trees and views and recommended against approval. Other opponents cited issues with the proposed housing density overwhelming the

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current infrastructure, difficulties in transplanting trees as the developer suggested, and apprehensions about crime associated with multi-family housing.

On the other hand, some individuals spoke in favor of the proposed development. Theresa Sidebotham, the owner of Telios Law also neighboring the development, highlighted the importance of annexation to maintain tax revenues for the town and advocated for the proposal's low-density approach. Another property owner adjacent to the site praised the proposal for preserving a gateway to Monument and endorsed apartments in the area as recommended by developers. Chris Fox, a resident in the vicinity, expressed preference for having a say in the development through annexation rather than leaving it to the county, indicating support for town oversight. Other supporters emphasized the developer's responsiveness to community concerns, the potential benefits of more apartments for housing affordability, and the belief that the town should move forward with the development to maintain some control over the process.

Whitehead assured the council that Monument Hill Road would not be eliminated by their development and that sound barriers would be installed along the highway to mitigate noise impact. Whitehead defended the annexation as not unusual and stated that plans were in place for constructing sanitary sewer systems, backed by a letter of approval from the district for water supply. Whitehead did not directly address concerns toward views or the apprehensions

about high-density housing and potential impacts on neighboring properties. Instead, he emphasized that the presented zoning was preliminary, acknowledging that much work remained ahead in the development process, and clarified that the project did not include any apartments, which had been a point of contention raised by some citizens.

Proposal fails and applicant withdraws

Following the citizens' comments and the developer's response, the debate among the council members centered on several key issues. King expressed his belief that the property should be handled as a PUD and criticized the proposed RA zoning, emphasizing concerns about clear-cutting and the lack of tree preservation. Councilmembers Jim Romanello and Fiorito supported keeping the development within Monument, expressing distrust in the county's handling of the project and the need to find a compromise. LaKind voiced his major concern about the density, hoping for a resolution through compromise. Councilmember Laura Kronick asked if an agreement could be reached, leading to a recess for private discussions. However, no compromise was achieved.

The council then voted on two resolutions related

to the annexation. Resolution No. 51-2023, which outlined findings of fact regarding the proposed annexation, passed unanimously with a 7-0 vote. However, Resolution No. 52-2023, which would have approved the annexation agreement with the developer, failed with a vote of 2-5 against. Councilmembers King, Kimple, Kronick, Sana Abbott, and Mayor LaKind voted against, while Romanello and Fiorito voted in favor. LaKind wished the developers luck with the county, and King warned citizens that the proposal would now be subject to county jurisdiction.

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, Aug. 7 and Monday, Aug. 21. Call 719-884-8014 or see www.townofmonument.org for information. To see upcoming agendas and complete board packets or to download audio recordings of past meetings, see <http://monumenttownco.minutesondemand.com> and click on Town Council.

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

Monument Planning Commission, June 28

Town Planning Commission recommends approval of Monument Ridge 1 and 2 despite community concerns

By Leslie Hanks

The June 28 Monument Planning Commission hearing on Monument Ridge 1 and 2 was standing room only, with many people forced to stand in the hallway and listen to the hearing over the internet on their

phones.

Chairperson Martin Trujillo, Vice Chairperson Danny Ours and Commissioners Nicholson, Greg Collins, Sean Zernickow, and Ray Egley were in attendance. Alternates Joe Kneeder and Chad Smith were sworn in as regular members for the meeting. Commissioner Cathy Green was in attendance online as a non-voting member.

The proposed annexation and zoning proposal had previously been heard and tabled Nov. 22, 2022.

Planning staff reviewed and recommended the annexing and rezoning of Monument Ridge 1, 90.98 acres on the southwest corner of County Line Road and I-25. The assertion was made that the property is contiguous to Monument, as required by state statute. However, it was later discussed that it was a "flagpole zoning," which involves annexing narrow parcels of land to reach another parcel under annexation consideration. Staff member Sheila Booth explained that the developer was asked to resubmit the proposal so that Monument could have control of the project rather than El Paso County. Apparently, the project would be phased in until the missing 16 acre-feet of water required at the proposed density is acquired.

The staff recommended annexation and Residential Attached (RA) zoning.

There was discussion of boarding house and multifamily use being removed as possible uses.

The staff noted there were no letters of support received but there were letters of opposition.

The staff then presented plans for Monument Ridge 2 at the southeast corner of County Line Road and I-25, which is a 71.01-acre parcel. Annexation was recommended with RA 358 patio homes/condos. They stated the contiguity requirement was met. Woodmoor Water and Sanitation (WWSD) would provide the water and there would be a metro district. Both proposals are within the town's recently adopted Three Mile Plan.

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The developer proposed creating roads, and there was discussion of upgrading Beacon Lite Road and creating a roundabout at Misty Acres and County Line Road.

The staff recommended approval.

The staff stated that public notice was given and that the proposal complies with the 2017 Comprehensive Plan and meets Colorado Revised Statutes.

The developer's representative, David Whitehead, explained that the Town of Monument invited him to re-apply. He explained that the roundabout was determined by a traffic study that included the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and Douglas County and that the roundabout can't encroach into Douglas County. CDOT supports the transportation proposal.

There were many public comments, including:

- "Why did the applicant withdraw and re-apply? What initiated the re-application?"
- "What is proposed to accommodate the children, which will be part of this huge proposal?"
- "Why were the citizens of Woodmoor not interacted with on a proposal of this magnitude when they will be most directly impacted?"
- "A proposal of this magnitude will obviously impact crime. Why isn't there a transition between Large Lot Residential and Residential Attached proposal?" Isn't this completely out of character with the current 2-acre lots adjacent?"
- "What are the children going to do, since the proposal is isolated and there is nothing in the plan to address the need?"
- "What are the names of those who asked this developer to re-apply?"
- "What will the impact to the police budget be?"
- "Is this part of the 'affordable housing' push by Governor Polis?"
- "Never ceases to amaze that developers ignore the Comprehensive Plan and the voice of the citizens. I worked on the 2017 Comp Plan, and this proposal is not in compliance with the 2017 Comprehensive Plan."
- "What about the wetlands in the area? How will the developer mitigate?"
- "We don't have enough water!"
- "Do we want Jackson Creek-type densities on Monument Hill?"
- "Why would we do a radical change from the current country feel?"
- "The Monument grocery store isn't adequate for this high-density proposal."
- "How can staff recommend going with this plan when it is short 16 acre-feet of water?" Denver, Dawson, and Arapahoe Sands aquifers are nearly dry."
- "You came back with basically the same proposal as last November; you can't be surprised that we care about our community and that's what you're seeing."
- "The developer is not looking at this from the perspective of the people most affected."

- "The Planning Commission should approve annexation but deny the density."

After the public comment period, Booth was asked to address the questions raised. She noted that Colorado Revised Statutes requires annexation and zoning be voted on simultaneously. She also explained that the school district was notified and was invited to submit comments. Booth stated that WWSD says they have enough water for the project. The question of adequate police coverage brought the reply that there are the El Paso County Sheriff's Office and local police, "and property tax will cover the costs."

A question raised about a wetland on the property sparked a discussion about whether it is a "regulatory wetland" and whether there is a requirement from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to address.

The staff noted that public notification was done properly and that the school district can ask for land dedication or "fees in lieu" but that ultimately the district will decide. In response to the question about how property values will be impacted, the staff remarked that that question has no easy answer.

During the staff discussion about water concerns, it was explained that the west side of I-25 proposal will be served by Monument Water and Sanitation and asserted that concern about the water shortage doesn't take into consideration "Water Wise" programs or low-flow toilets.

In a closing remark, the developer said that from an economic standpoint, any lower density would make it impossible to justify the necessary infrastruc-

ture.

Finally, the staff recommended that concerned citizens should be sure to attend the July Town Council meeting to express their concerns.

Votes on the proposals:

Commissioner Ours' motion to approve annexation on proposal 1, minus boarding houses, manufactured housing, and multifamily, failed 4-3.

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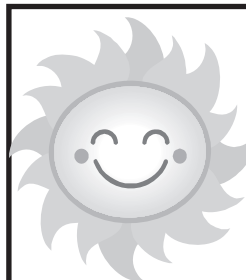
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Ours responded to the question of “How can staff recommend (the proposal)” with his opinion that staff does an excellent job. He’s “hoping we can work things out here to be able to give Town Council guidance.” He stated, “We’re interested in the community too,” and that “We’re trying to do the right thing.”

Ours also noted that, “The developer spends millions putting a proposal together and if we vote to deny, we might face a lawsuit.”

Green made additional comments about the disparity between the Comprehensive Plan and these proposals and raised concerns about putting this conceptual plan in an annexation agreement and then the developer would be free to do whatever it wants.

More discussion centered on whether Monument can work with the developer to create a proposal the community can live with, or whether the developer might go back to El Paso County to get what it wants and will likely be granted permission for.

Commissioner Egley raised concerns about the economic impact to Monument.

GENDER ISSUES (Cont. from 1)

Background and legal counsel

Board President Ryan Graham began the meeting by providing context and background, noting that the board and administration had been hearing from many of its constituents about the use of sex-specific common bathrooms and locker rooms by students who want to identify with or express a gender that does not correlate with their biological sex. Graham noted that these students are ostensibly protected by Colorado law, specifically SB08-200 and HB21-1108. For more information on these bills, see <https://bit.ly/sb08-2008> and <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb21-1108>.

He noted that the state mandates that every traditional and charter school must not discriminate and must let students use the bathroom and locker room that aligns with their gender expression or identity. Many schools, he said, have capitulated to the cancel culture mob that seeks to silence and destroy them. MA, he said, proposed this Town Hall so parents could learn what their rights are and understand what MA is doing to protect parental rights and all students. Tonight’s Town Hall, he said, was not about inciting hatred or harm against any student. MA is not here to wage war against children but to push back firmly within legal limits on those who have set their sights on coming after our children, he said.

Miller, MA’s longtime legal counsel, noted that he has been one of MA’s lawyers for 15 years and that his mother-in-law’s name is on the library. He said he shares traits with his heroes Moses and the Apostle Paul but is not a gifted speaker and asked the audience to pray that his message would be better than his weak flesh. He referred to the book 1984 by George Orwell, where the protagonist had to maintain a secret journal. Tonight, the MA board and leadership want to invite you into a little conspiracy, said Miller, and to join them in being thought criminals like the protagonist in 1984.

Some folks are inclined to place their faith in an authoritarian government, Miller said. It’s hard for them to conceive that the parent movement expressed by the attendees is organic, based upon faith, principles, and values.

Miller noted that in 2021, the state Legislature passed House Bill 21-1108 to amend Colorado’s anti-discrimination act to offer protection for those of any gender expression or identity. Expression, he noted, is appearance, dress, or behavior, while identity is the innate sense of one’s own gender, which may or may not accord with the gender assigned at birth. He noted that Moms 4 Liberty has been very engaged on these issues, saying that some schools have taken this to an extreme. Some schools, he said, have directed staff to recognize a student’s gender expression or identity

The developer responded with, “You won’t get sales tax or property tax if we go back to the county.” Egley continued, stating that he is uncomfortable that the flag-pole annexation will leave 1,200 people isolated with no connection to the town and no open space or yards for kids.

The Planning Commission voted to annex both parcels and change the density from RA (Residential Attached) to LLR (Large Lot Residential)—9,000-square-foot lots.

The votes all passed 6-1, with Commissioner Egley voting no on all motions.

The project is recommended to the Monument Town Council for approval.

See the Town Council article on page 1.

The next meeting will be at 6 p.m. Aug. 9. See <http://townofmonument.org> or call 719-481-2954 for more information.

Leslie Hanks can be contacted at lesliehanks@ocn.me.

but not to inform parents. MA, he said, has pushed to engage parents in a dialog. On Feb. 22, the board adopted a proclamation to clarify that MA wishes to place the authority for education and well-being of children in the hands of parents. See OCN article www.ocn.me/v22n3.htm#ma for more information on the February meeting.

Miller went on to outline other concerns on rules around COVID, critical race theory (CRT), and sex ideology in remote learning. He claimed that parents learned that teachers introduced doctrines contrary to those of the parents. Now, he said, there is a coordinated movement to undermine parental access to information and parental authority. One remaining protection, he cited, was a U.S. Supreme Court case, *Troxel v. Granville*, which recognized parental rights to direct the upbringing of their kids.

Public comments

In the public comments portion of the meeting, a number of people stepped up to speak in support of the board’s actions. Some of the statements made are:

- Kristy Davis, co-chair of the El Paso County chapter of Moms 4 Liberty, read a statement from herself and co-chair Darcy Schoening, who was not in attendance. Davis, who has two children at MA, thanked the board for holding the event and hearing from parents who have been harmed by a vocal minority weaponizing sexuality and gender. She said the movement seeks to weaken parents’ rights and that this is communism. She said there are no transgender children, just confused children, and adults who use them as political chess pieces. Moms 4 Liberty, she said, is standing with MA and fully supports Miller in his efforts.
- A seventh-grader at MA said that she felt safe at MA until last year when “a boy decided to go into a girl’s restroom,” where the girls change. She said in the Bible in Genesis it says that God created mankind, male and female. Her parents said that safety is important, and they love all children and don’t want any to feel bullied, but that the last thing any parent wants to hear is that their children didn’t feel protected and safe.
- Another seventh-grader said she didn’t think it was right for a boy to come into the girl’s restroom and invade their privacy. Some of her friends were there and went home crying to their parents, she said. God made us who we are, and she doesn’t think kids should try to change themselves for no reason. Her mother added that she would like to provide a safe gender-neutral stall bathroom so everyone would feel safe. She asked the board to please not put litter boxes in these bathrooms for the “furries.”
- A parent asked if the board was developing plans to defend itself against pre-emptive legal challenges. Miller responded that MA might need to turn to parents if it becomes costly. He noted that challenges could come from the courts, from MA’s district authorizer, or from the Colorado Department of Education. He felt that the Supreme Court ruling would prevail.
- A parent thanked the board and acknowledged the bravery of the students who spoke and cited a swimming sports competition. He also said there was concern about a “biological girl” using the men’s restroom or locker room or competing on opposite-sex teams and asked that the school not send kids to the nurse’s individual-use bathroom.
- Ivy Liu, a D49 board member, asked to speak on behalf of families who don’t want to speak. Among other charges, she said that 1%-2% of the population was being weaponized for a much greater cause, kids were being groomed, parents manipulated, and language contaminated to push group think which was the foundation of socialism, Marxism, and communism, otherwise known as collectivism. America, she said, is the last wall standing between freedom and worldwide communism. Parents must fight back, she said, on these non-Godly and non-American values.
- Another parent raised concerns about fair and equitable treatment of kids and whether MA should have policies around biological males competing with females. Miller noted that this raised the question about accepting federal funds and competing within the Colorado High Schools Activities Association (CHSAA), which MA has been pursuing.
- A parent noted having to be careful about what pronouns are used and what name is used for a student. She cited an instance when she decided to call her now adult daughter by her middle name in first grade and the school forbade

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it because it had not been legally changed. Miller said the resolution covered this but there was a gray area where a boy might want to go by a nickname that might be considered feminine.

- Another parent asked if the policies would be in place by Aug. 15 since parents would be making enrollment decisions by that date. Miller said no, but the parents could rely on the clarity of the resolution and its parameters.
- Mark McWilliams, former MA board president, said there were parents going through something difficult that all parents pray is not their kid. The board is thinking of that too, he said, and making sure all children are protected and loved. He said that when he was on the board, they brainstormed how to manage this. He asked that parents vote in the future and keep their checkbooks ready in case the board was sued.
- A parent strongly advocated for policies that would not allow biological males in the private spaces of females and vice versa saying that the school would be liable. Miller said there will be lawsuits that cut in both directions.
- A parent said she was a pediatric dentist and sees many kids with anxiety who take medications. She asked if MA had proactive mental health strategies and felt it would be important to present the policy in written form when it comes out as it would help weed out families that would have a problem with it. Miller said that the board would adopt the related policy in its public meeting after two readings so it would be incredibly transparent. McClelland said she has discussed partnering with parents and providing training opportunities like parenting classes. She has lots of ideas around parent universities to empower parents.
- A parent asked if there was a plan to have conversations with parents on how they might engage in legal issues or circumstances. Miller replied that he didn't want to give away legal strategies in front of a crowd but that these topics and pathways had been discussed in executive sessions.
- A parent, noting the law is written to prohibit discrimination, asked how someone could voice their opposition without being discriminatory, such as starting a petition. Miller said that SB23-296 was passed concerning protections for students against discriminatory practices at school to

prevent bullying and that starting a petition against a student might be considered bullying.

- The parent continued, asking for advice at the statewide level on how to stand unified in agreement on the issue and yet not cross the line, so your student is not made to feel like a discriminator. Miller said the issue must be addressed structurally, and finding the right people to populate the board is crucial.
- A parent asked if there was a permission slip for locker rooms and restrooms where they want their student to be able to go. She said her understanding was that if the school takes government money, it must follow the laws and asked if MA had considered getting an outside channel of funds to bypass this requirement. Miller said MA could not afford to refuse the per pupil revenue—it is the bread and butter of how MA exists.
- Former state Rep. Tim Geitner said that in his past role he had the ability to vote no on laws like HB21-1108. Now, as president of the Liberty Tree Academy charter school, he thanked the MA board for doing this for their community and other charter schools.

Resolution

After the public comments concluded, Graham moved to adopt a resolution regarding the privacy and protection of students as regards to SB08-200 and HB21-1108 that states:

- The above laws expose its students to undue harm, confusion, and dysphoria.
- MA encourages its students to set boundaries protecting their privacy and report to their teachers, staff, or administrators if their boundaries are violated.
- MA will support the privacy and dignity of each student and not discriminate against individuals in violation of state or federal laws regardless of sex, gender expression, or gender identity.
- The board will never promote gender confusion or gender dysphoria in students nor promote transitioning of students that are gender confused, whether intentionally or unintentionally.
- The board will uphold the rights of parents under the Granville Supreme Court ruling and will mandate that any student under the age of 18 choosing to express or identify as a gender that does not correlate with their biological sex must be affirmed by the student's parents or guardians and that these family units must be in

complete agreement with this affirmation.

- The board will mandate that any student under the age of 18 whose family affirms them must further transition with a change of name and change of gender in Infinite Campus and any other school records and must conform to the dress code of the gender that they now identify or express as with no vacillation.
- For any student who chooses to go down this transitioning path that meets the mandated requirements of MA, the board directs the administration to notify the appropriate parent community without violating the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) or any other law, that there may be a student using gender-specific bathrooms or locker rooms different than the student's sex so other students may request to use a single-stall bathroom or to have a staff member monitor the vacancy of the single-sex locker room or bathroom to ensure their privacy and protection.
- Parents are strongly encouraged to advise their chosen attorney if they believe their child's Fourth Amendment right to privacy is being violated and consult with

said attorney on taking further legal action against the parent or guardian of the offending students.

- The board affirms that elected state and national leaders have a moral and ethical obligation to challenge and repeal such laws that violate the innocence, vulnerability, well-being, privacy, and safety of children.
- The board appeals to the MA community and constituents to make their voices heard as active and engaged citizens but to contact their state and national representatives and ask them to take a stand for the privacy and protection of students.

Vice President Lindsay Clinton seconded the motion, and other board members and McClelland spoke in favor of it. The board voted unanimously to pass the resolution. The full text of the resolution can be found at <https://bit.ly/ma-discrim-resol>.

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, Aug. 10, at 6 p.m. at the East Campus. See more information, see <https://bit.ly/ma-boe>. Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education, June 26

Enhancement of audio systems, curriculum, policies approved

By Harriet Halbig

Due to the lateness of the June meeting of the Board of Education, only a brief notice was included in the July issue. Following is a more detailed description.

Enhancement of audio systems

The board discussed investing in enhancement of audio capability in the schools. This enhancement will include microphones, classroom speakers, front office media players, licenses, and outdoor speaker capability among other improvements.

In a proposed phase 1 of the project, enhancements would be installed in Lewis-Palmer Elementary, Lewis-Palmer Middle School, and Lewis-Palmer High School.

Chief Business Officer Brett Ridgway said the project would focus on technology and infrastructure to en-

hance the district's safety and security. He said that the project had been reviewed by Chief of Security Dennis Coates for its effectiveness.

Some of the proposed funding will come from contingency funds from the 2022-23 district budget.

Ridgway said that some schools now have failing intercom systems and a need to amplify announcements into each classroom.

Director Matthew Clawson asked whether it was necessary to enhance all three schools now.

Superintendent KC Somers said that Lewis-Palmer Elementary is most in need as it is the oldest of the three schools.

Board Treasurer Ron Schwarz commented that district officials thoroughly investigated suppliers and manufacturers before coming to this



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decision. He said the enhancement would provide additional connectivity with public safety and law enforcement officials in the event of an emergency and would include information on card readers and other district programs.

Board President Tiffiney Upchurch asked whether there is a financial advantage to doing this now.

Director of Operations and Development Chris Coulter responded that this is a life-saving system. He suggested that if all schools are not upgraded at once, it may be possible to complete the upgrades during late night or early morning hours.

The board approved the proposal 4-1, with Clawson voting nay.

Curriculum discussion

The board approved new curriculum for fourth-grade history (The Colorado Story, an updated version of the current curriculum), fourth- and fifth-grade social studies, and fourth- and fifth- grade science. In addition, the

board approved the use of character education programs which have been used on a trial basis over the past year.

The board also approved additional counselors for the elementary schools. During the discussion it was emphasized that there is a concern about accountability and privacy and to respect community values rather than national standards.

The board approved the curriculum 4-1 with Clawson voting nay.

Policy discussions

The board approved updated policies on wellness, which include provisions for physical education and nutritional requirements.

The board also approved a new policy regarding the provision of medically necessary treatment in the schools. The policy states that the treatment must be recommended by a Colorado licensed healthcare provider or licensed private health care specialist. The provider or specialist must attend IEP (individual

education plan) or 504 meetings to discuss the necessity of the treatments.

The district also retains the ability to have the treatments administered by qualified district staff or a contracted provider.

An additional provision allows the provider or specialist access to the classroom to observe as long as this observation is not disruptive.

Restructuring of bus routes

Somers explained that district bus routes are divided into three priority groups.

The first priority group is the special education routes as they are required by federal law.

The second priority is the regular neighborhood routes which are at or near capacity.

The third priority are those routes east of Highway 83.

At the time of the meeting, four people were undergoing driver training. All of these drivers would be as-

signed to priorities 1 and 2. There is an ongoing shortage of drivers. At the moment there will be only one route to serve students east of Highway 83.

Election discussion

The board appointed Vicki Wood, secretary to the superintendent, as the district's representative to notify county officials of the desire to participate in the Nov. 7 election. Four of the five board positions are eligible for election this year.

Petition packets can be picked up from Wood at the administration building beginning Aug 9.

The Lewis-Palmer D 38 Board of Education meets at 6 p.m. on the third Monday of each month in the district learning center, 146 Jefferson St., Monument. The next meeting will be on Aug. 21.

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

Monument Academy School Board, July 13

Board organizes, approves before and after care contract

By Jackie Burhans

The Monument Academy (MA) board held its July 13 meeting at The Platinum Group offices in Colorado Springs, which is the office of board President Ryan Graham. The board handled several organizational matters, agreed to a contract for before and after care, and heard committee and administrator updates.

The regular meeting was followed by a board retreat that included on-boarding of new members, review of the board manual and calendar, continuous improvement and assessment, legal requirements, and strategic planning.

Board member organization

Newly elected board member Matt Ross was sworn in for his three-year term, and all board members took their required annual oath of office and signed affidavits to be forwarded to the county clerk.

Board members then discussed and volunteered for committee assignments as follows:

- Highway 105 – Ryan Graham, president
- Curriculum – Emily Belisle, secretary
- School Accountability and Advisory (West Campus) – Matt Ross, board member
- School Accountability and Advisory (East Campus) – Lindsay Clinton, vice president
- Governance – Joe Buczkowski, treasurer, and Karen Hoida, board

member

- Finance – Buczkowski and Craig Carle, board member
- Building and Facilities – Hoida and Graham
- Resource Development – Carle and Clinton
- Human Resources – Clinton and Graham

As part of the discussion, the board agreed to fold the Safety and Security Committee into the Buildings and Facilities Committee and to disband the Volunteer Committee as MA is moving to a new system called ParentSquare.

Before and after care contract signed

Graham noted that the board had approved a revision to a potential contract for before and after care with Leading Edge in November 2022 but that Leading Edge did not agree to the changes. The board considered a new proposal by Monument's Best that had been vetted by its legal counsel. Tom and Chrystal Lind, founders of Monument's Best, were present to answer questions. They noted that there is a state-mandated process to vet employees who would be given access to MA that included background checks, courses, and CPR certification.

Operations Manager Jake Dicus met with Monument's Best when the Leading Edge arrangement didn't work out. His kids have participated in its program, and he felt it would fulfill a need for MA's families. Dicus said 15 families must sign up for the before

care program to work financially. If MA is closed, Monument's Best will offer sports camps using MA's facilities for MA kids and, possibly, other kids from the community. Once approved, Dicus planned to put together a slide show to send out to parents to gain interest and would present it as part of the back-to-school night. Dicus and elementary school Principal Kurt Walker have discussed the facilities to be used at MA's West Campus.

Monument's Best has membership software to help parents sign up for its programs. Its contract is for one year with wording for indemnification. It is licensed for up to 60 kids but could amend that if needed.

The board unanimously approved the contract and authorized Graham to execute it.

Highlights

Board meeting highlights include:

- Graham reported that work was in progress on the recirculation road around MA West necessitated by the Highway 105 expansion. Some re-engineering was required due to water runoff from heavy rains. He said carline information would be sent out before school starts.
- A parent spoke during the public comment agenda item, expressing concern about showing non-educational movies to kids for indoor recess in general and objecting to the movie Elemental by Disney specifically. She also asked if MA would be required to financially participate in the Capturing Kids Hearts (CKH) program each year, noting it has cost \$45,000.
- Interim Chief Executive Officer Kim McClelland provided financial highlights in lieu of financial consultant Officer Glen Gustafson, saying he is in a good place with the audit and is closing out the school year. She had no details to share from the district on the free lunch service but noted that only the elementary school would be participating. She also noted that the CKH expense was

for the initial staff training to use the discipline model in the hand-book. Principals could sign up for a premium offer with resources, mentoring, and implementation guides for \$4,000 annually.

- The board discussed and approved an updated student hand-book for its West Campus, making minor updates to carline, board eligibility, and logo use.
- The board unanimously approved the new graduation requirements presented by high school Principal David Kennington, who noted that requirements include a capstone project. He said that parents and students want to have a traditional valedictorian honor for the highest grade point average (GPA), which may have to be determined at the thousandth level. Additional honors for high GPAs would be conferred. Graduation is expected to be on Saturday, May 18, possibly at MA, wearing a black gown with a stole. He said families wanted guidelines for senior photos, suggesting a modest dress code with no pajamas or furry costumes be submitted with a message that aligns with MA.
- The board approved an update to the 1501ES Elementary School Uniform Policy, adding a daily wear sweatshirt with MA's logo.
- The board unanimously approved the preschool calendar, policies and procedures, and revised tuition contract.
- The board discussed the draft of new curriculum policies to include supplemental curriculum selection and tabled any action to the August board meeting.

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

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



Above: At its July 13 meeting held at The Platinum Group offices in Colorado Springs, Monument Academy (MA) board President Ryan Graham (left, standing) swears in newly elected board member Matt Ross (right, standing). Seated are board members, from left, Joe Buczkowski, Craig Carle, Emily Belisle, and Lindsay Clinton. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*



Above: At the July 13 Monument Academy (MA) board meeting, all board members took their annual oath of office and signed affidavits to be sent to the clerk and recorder. Standing from left are Joe Buczkowski, treasurer; Karen Hoida, board member; Craig Carle, board member; Emily Belisle, secretary; Ryan Graham, president; Lindsay Clinton, vice president, and Matt Ross, board member. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

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Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, July 12, 13, and 27

Water rates to rise 5% annually

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

The Palmer Lake Board of Trustees (PLBOT) met three times in July: regular board meetings were held on July 13 and 27 and a workshop was held on July 12. The board continued its work on water rates, the future of the Elephant Rock property, and how to regulate recreational vehicle (RV) use and storage on private and public property. The board heard an audit report on its 2022 budget. It held two public hearings, both of which led to votes.

The board voted on a resolution facilitating cooperation between the Palmer Lake Police Department and surrounding police departments. It revised the priorities for maintaining the water and sewer system documented in its Preliminary Engineering Report and renewed the intergovernmental agreement that regulates the town's ambulance service. The board considered a special event permit and recognized Focus on the Forest volunteers for their work to eliminate graffiti.

The July 12 meeting was preceded by an executive session to develop negotiation strategies regarding the lease agreements for the EcoSpa and the Star View Ranch, and regarding the intergovernmental agreement (IGA) between the town and the Monument Fire Department. The July 27 meeting was preceded by an executive session to discuss a letter of intent concerning the Norris Hay Ranch.

Water rates to increase 5% annually

At the water rate workshop on July 12, water rate consultant Chris Brandewie presented several scenarios to the board which were designed to fully fund the town's water service and allow for the accumulation of reserve funds earmarked for future capital improvement projects. The different scenarios also addressed questions and concerns the board members had expressed in previous discussions. The board asked Brandewie to modify the rate structure one last time for final consideration at the board meeting scheduled for July 27, at which time a final vote would be taken.

At the regular board meeting the next day, the board returned to the issue. Director Dennis Stern and Town Administrator Dawn Collins summarized the rates changes they had directed Brandewie to work out as a 5% increase in the water base rate and water usage charges, changes to the tier structure, and a 5% increase in future tap fees.

Resident Roger Mosely opposed the changes, arguing the increased base rate treated low-income families unfairly and that water funds needed to go into their own bank account. Collins explained that different accounting codes were used to track water funds, that a separate bank account was not needed, and in fact separate bank accounts had proved convoluted in the past.

Mayor Glant Havenar said she wanted most of the increased revenue to come from increasing the base rate, not from increases in the tiered usage charges. She added the rates could be adjusted annually if necessary.

At the July 27 meeting, the board considered Resolution 54-2023, which documents all rate changes and projects them over a five-year period. The resolution specifies:

- Beginning in 2024, water tap fees will increase 5% annually.
- The water tiers will be redesigned, and usage rates

will increase 5% annually beginning in January 2025.

- The monthly base fee, which contributes to capital improvement projects and debt service, will increase to \$85 per month for residential customers starting with the September 2023 billing. Commercial customers, out-of-town customers, and irrigation customers will pay higher base fees.
- The rate increases will continue annually until the board directs otherwise.

The resolution, which contains tables listing all the water rate changes, can be found online at page 90 of the board meeting packet, available here: <https://bit.ly/plbot-packet-230727>.

In the discussion of the resolution, Director Samantha Padgett asked that the resolution be amended to add a sunset clause that would end the annual increases after five years unless the board took action to continue them. Havenar pointed out the board could alter the annual increases at any time. Padgett insisted that a sunset clause ending annual increases on Jan. 1, 2029 be added to it.

The amended resolution passed, with Directors Shana Ball, Kevin Dreher, Sam Padgett, and Dennis Stern, as well as Havenar, voting yes. Director Jessica Farr voted no, and Director Nick Ehrhardt was excused from the meeting and did not vote.

Elephant Rock property future debated

At the July 13 meeting, Collins told the board the Palmer Lake Planning Commission had met on July 19 and had recommended development at the Elephant Rock property stop, except for trail construction, until the master plan was complete. Havenar said she was not comfortable stopping the process.

At the July 27 meeting, the board continued this discussion. Havenar said the board was considering three concepts for the property: the spa proposed by Richard and Lindsay Willan, the wedding venue proposed by Franco Pisani and Lindsey Truitt, and the perimeter trail proposed by the Parks Commission. She also mentioned that the police and fire departments requested land to be reserved for a public safety building. Havenar said many ideas for the property were being informally proposed and the town did not have the staff or the insurance coverage to address them. The future of the cabins on the property was uncertain, as the draft master plan calls for them to be demolished, the town does not have staff to manage them, and the town's insurer wants them boarded up and fenced before allowing residents to visit the Elephant Rock property.

Farr said she was grateful for the many suggestions about uses for the cabins. She said the board had decided to lease 2.8 acres to the Willans, proceed with the wedding venue proposal and reserve three acres for the police and fire departments, who will use the longhouse for training before it is demolished.

Havenar and Farr asked for comments from the audience. Gina Brennehan said moving forward without a complete master plan "appears to defy logic." She asked for the neighbors' request for peace and quiet to be considered and requested noise, safety, lights, the beauty of the site, quality of life and home values all be studied. She also suggested some of the land

should be put into a conservation trust.

Havenar responded that the town owns the land so there is no need for a trust, adding that the cabins were uninsurable and this was preventing the town from opening the property to residents. She agreed to revisit the issue of a trust.

Richard Willan told the board he was willing to lease the cabins from the town, board up the windows and fence them off at his expense and then begin repairing them one by one. He offered to insure them at his expense and said he would form an LLC to manage them. He believed they could be rented to week-enders. Dreher, Farr, Stern and Havenar did not support Willan's offer. Other residents spoke in favor of and against leaving the cabins in place.

Ball ended the discussion by saying the board would continue to look into the suggestions for the property.

RV policy takes shape

At the July 13 meeting, Havenar said a policy on RVs was needed because they currently were not addressed in the municipal code and the board wanted to prevent people living in RVs within the town limits. Town Attorney Matt Krob said the policy should make it clear RVs could not be used as Additional Dwelling Units, which are subordinate dwellings sharing a lot with a primary dwelling, whether attached or separate.

Ball questioned whether the town had the constitutional right to decide how people can use their property. Krob answered RVs could be regulated by towns just as towns specify setbacks and other regulations that affect private property. Boards are charged

with administering affairs to ensure health and safety. Zoning and fire codes are examples of this, he said.

Collins said that at one time the municipal code did regulate RVs. Now the town frequently fields questions about residents residing long term in RVs on private property. She said the town's regulations on short-term rentals prevent RVs from being used as short-term rentals.

Fire Chief John Vincent pointed out that RVs present fire and safety issues, arguing the single door and gray water disposal were concerns.

The discussion at this meeting ended with a consensus that RV use on public land needed regulation, and Krob said he would begin drafting a policy.

The RV discussion continued at the July 27 meeting. Krob put together questions for the board to answer to guide the policy development. The board generally sup-

ported:

- Storing RVs on private property.
- Honoring setbacks when an RV is on private property.
- RVs on private property can't be permanently occupied.

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- RVs can have temporary electrical connections, but not water or wastewater connections.
 - Using Code Enforcement to address violations of policy.
- The board generally did not support:
- Specifying where an RV must be stored on private property.
 - Requiring RVs on private property be covered or screened.
 - Using RVs to camp on public property.
 - Using private property to store RVs as a commercial enterprise.
- The board did not take a position on use of generators with RVs on private property.

Audit of 2022 budget shows good financial health

David Green, of Green and Associates, the town’s independent auditing company, presented the results of his audit of the town’s 2022 financial statements. His report gave the town an unmodified “clean” opinion, indicating the statements are in line with generally accepted accounting principles and provide an accurate picture of the town’s finances for 2022. He performed a risk-based audit designed to identify and address risks.

He reported some checks that were erroneously duplicated, but noted they were only paid once. He complimented the town staff for their cooperation with his work.

He said the town’s net position, a statement of what the town owns and owes, was \$4 million, with \$2.6 million in the General Fund and the rest in the Enterprise Water Fund. The town’s assets are mainly property tax receivables, Green said. He noted funds from the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) that have been received but not yet spent. Those funds are tracked, and the remainder is known, he said.

Green pointed out the Water Fund is its own enterprise, has its own financial statements and has its own opinion in his report.

Mosely asked Green to comment on the fact that \$800,000 was budgeted for Capital and Operations and Maintenance but only \$194,000 was spent. Mosely asked if that was reasonable. Green replied every budget should be as accurate as possible, but revenues and expenditures have to be estimated and it’s “easy enough” for some funds to be unspent. State law requires towns not to exceed their published budget, but spending less than what is budgeted doesn’t mean the budget should be adjusted down.

In response to a question from Havenar about why amounts don’t always match the budget on a month-to-month basis, Green pointed out that there can be a lag when invoices are presented. Accounting uses hindsight, he explained, and sometimes things are not reconciled until an audit is performed and charges made to incorrect accounts are adjusted. It was common to adjust accounting entries throughout the year, he said. Collins pointed out the accounting codes the town uses have changed over time and it wasn’t until 2021 that the town began to budget for capital items. Havenar said uncertainty about ex-

penses and revenues sometimes required the town to budget high.

Green said he has seen constant improvement in the town’s financial processes in the eight years he has served as the town’s auditor. “It seems to get smoother every year,” he said.

Padgett asked if the Water Fund was under budget and Green answered expenses were \$889,699 under budget and revenues were \$245,435 less than expected.

Later in the meeting, the board voted in favor of Resolution 48-2023, which authorizes staff to file the 2022 audit report with the state.

At the July 27 meeting, in her administrative report, in response to comments that the town had misused ARPA funds, Collins affirmed with the board that the 2022 audit included a review of the town’s use of ARPA funds, with a positive result. She mentioned that when the town received the ARPA funds a call was held with the state, who agreed that water lines and a well were appropriate uses of the funds. There was no misuse of ARPA funds, Collins said.

Public hearings

At the July 27 meeting, the board held two public hearings, both of which led to votes later in the meeting.

The first public hearing concerned a minor subdivision request from Scott Phillips, who requested to subdivide his five-acre lot on Rockridge Road into three lots: a 2.5-acre lot for his home, a 1.4-acre lot and a 1.3-acre lot. The second and third lot would be developed later, he said. Phillips told the board the Planning Commission had unanimously supported his request.

There were no comments from the public on Phillips’ request, and the board voted unanimously in favor of Resolution 49-2203 approving his request.

The second public hearing was more contentious. Sylvia Amons requested a conditional use permit allowing her to develop her property at 56 Highway 105 as a mixed-use commercial and residential project. Amons said she had begun planning the project in 2018, but the town’s moratorium on water and sewer taps stalled it. She was also delayed by issues of the proposed building’s height and the number of floors. Amons said she wanted to develop the property as a three-story building within the town’s current height limitation, with commercial space on the bottom floor and two floors of residential units.

Collins said the Planning Commission decided the project complied with the master plan and would add needed housing to the town. Havenar pointed out that Amons’ plan was approved in 2018, with a height of 32 feet and two stories. Havenar also said the question before the board was not the design of the building but only the question of whether the property could be developed for mixed use. The property was currently zoned for commercial use, Havenar said. The plan would be considered later in the process.

Several residents spoke against the project, citing concerns with access to the lot, impact on traffic, the density, the proximity to other homes, the impact on neighbors’ views of Ben Lomond, location of trash

receptacles, inadequate parking, lowering of property values, and turnover in the residential units.

Havenar and Krob pointed out, again, that the issue before the board was only whether to allow mixed residential and commercial use, and not the design of the building.

Ball pointed out that citizens wanted to see a mix of commercial and residential on the town’s main street. The state Legislature is pushing for more affordable housing, she said, adding Amon’s project addressed those concerns.

Havenar said a 30-foot-tall commercial building might be less to the neighbors liking than Amons’ project. The Planning Commission and the Board of Adjustment would work through all the design details later, she said.

The hearing was closed, and the board voted to approve Resolution 50-2023, granting Amons her conditional use permit for a mixed-use project, with Dreher voting no, Ball, Farr, Padgett, Stern and Havenar voting yes. Ehrhardt was excused from the meeting and did not vote.

Other votes

- The board voted unanimously in favor of Resolution 47-2023, which renews a cooperative agreement between the Palmer Lake Police Department and El Paso County allowing the town to rely on the county when doing investigations involving child abuse and neglect.
- The board voted unanimously to approve Resolution 51-2023, which updates the high priority task list in the Preliminary Engineering Report that addresses the town’s water system maintenance needs.
- The board voted unanimously in favor of Resolution 53-2023, which revises an intergovernmental agreement between the town and the Monument Fire Department regarding ambulance service and medical transport to allow an annual fee rather than per-call fees, making it easier for the town to budget for the service.
- A special permit was granted to Verity’s Village to hold a fundraiser in the form of a running event at the lake on Sept. 16.

Focus on the Forest honored

Jimmy Zelones, Tyson Reese, and Shawn Nielson of Focus on the Forest were presented with certificates of appreciation for their work removing graffiti from the reservoir trail. For more information, see <https://focusontheforest.org>.

The next board meetings are scheduled for Aug. 10 and 24. 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. JamesHowaldcanbereachedatjameshowald@ocn.me. JackieBurhanscanbereachedatjackieburhans@ocn.me.

Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, July 26

Election called to dissolve subdistrict and complete merger

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) meeting on July 26, the board approved a resolution calling for a coordinated election on Nov. 7, approved a joint resolution of advocacy, a joint factual summary for the election process, and approved funds for the district and subdistrict elections with assistance from Special District Solutions. The district also approved the 2022 audit.

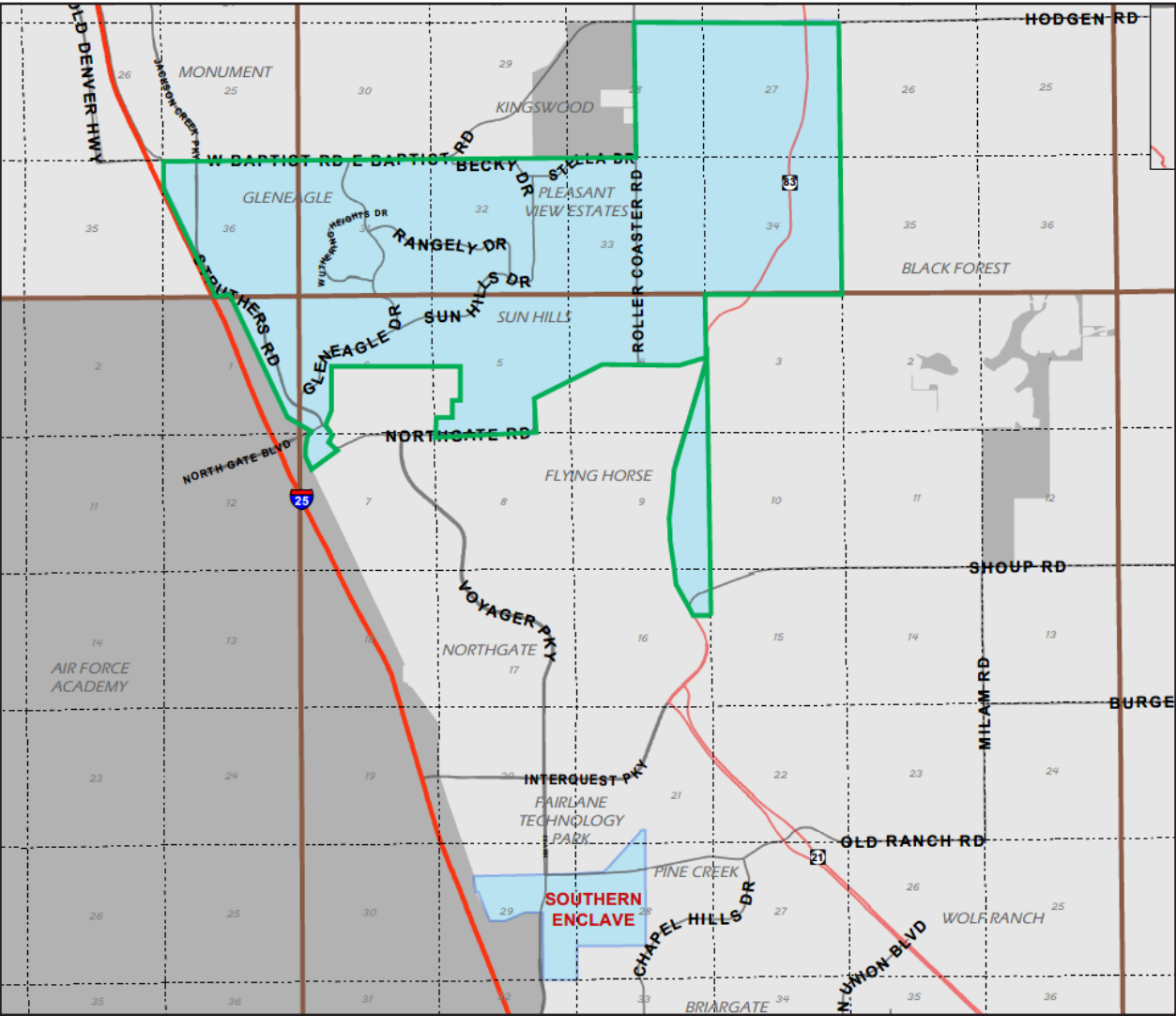
Treasurer Duane Garrett attended via Zoom and Secretary Larry Schwarz joined the meeting in person at 4:40 p.m.

Director Charles Fleece was presumed travelling and was excused.

Election called to complete merger

Background: In 2016, the City of Colorado Springs took about one-half of the district’s territory, prompting the creation of the northern subdistrict over most of the district area that was left, to make sure there was enough revenue to continue providing services. Since then, the district’s jurisdiction and the northern subdistrict’s jurisdiction have been almost identical. Only one small enclave of property remains inside the fire district, known locally as the “Montezuma area” or the “Southern Enclave.” See map.

On Dec. 8, 2021 after about 11 months of negotiations and to better serve the community, the district entered into an operational and administration intergovernmental agreement with Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District dba Monument Fire District (MFD). At the beginning of January 2022, without warning American Medical Response abruptly withdrew ambulance service from former Station 1 (Gle-neagle Drive), six months earlier than anticipated. Due to the agreement to begin unifying the districts,



Above: Map of the Donald Wescott Fire District showing the "Southern Enclave." Map courtesy DWFPD.

MFD was able to provide immediate EMS service to the DWFPD. See www.ocn.me/v22n1.htm#dwfpd and #mfd.

Since then, district staff have been transferred to the MFD payroll, blended into a five station service area staffed only by professional firefighters, and the firefighters now have new apparatus and ambulances, compatible self-contained breathing apparatus and radios, and wear the same uniforms in a combined district. Stations 4 and 5 (formerly Stations 1 and 2) have been transformed to accommodate additional staff. The Station 4 leaking roof was repaired and rooftop HVAC unit replaced, and the broken bay door fixed. The water heaters were replaced at both stations. The remodel plans for both stations are al-

most finalized, and both will be completed ahead of the remodel of Station 2 on Roller Coaster Road. The transfer of stations, apparatus, and equipment was approved by the Board of Directors and legally transferred to MFD on Oct. 18, 2022. See www.ocn.me/v22n11.htm#dwfpd.

The district’s attorney, Emily Powell, said a court hearing requesting an order of election took place on June 23. The subdistrict will seek dissolution only if the fire district (Southern Enclave) seeks to increase its mill levy to offset the revenue that will be lost. If only the subdistrict is dissolved, the loss of 14.9 mills would be devastating to the district’s ability to operate. All of the steps and actions the district has taken so far were court approved and now it is time to ask

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the voters what they think, she said. See www.ocn.me/v23n5.htm#dwfpd.

Powell requested the board approve a resolution calling for the Board of Directors to approve a coordinated election, asking for a mill levy increase for the district (Southern Enclave) and the dissolution of the northern subdistrict on Nov. 7, 2023. The election will be conducted by the El Paso County Clerk, and the Designated Election Official (DEO) will be Fire Chief Andy Kovacs with the assistance of an independent election assistant.

The board approved Kovacs as the DEO for the subdistrict election, 4-0.

Voter education will be crucial, and both ballot measures will either pass together or fail together, said Powell.

The board approved a resolution calling for a coordinated election on Nov 7, 2023, 4-0.

Joint resolution of advocacy and factual summary

Powell requested the Board of Directors for the district and the northern subdistrict approve a joint resolution of advocacy on behalf of the district and subdistrict and approve a joint factual summary for both districts. The joint factual summary states:

- DWFPD provides fire protection and emergency services. It has a 7.0 mill levy base assessed on property tax valuation.
- The DWFPD northern subdistrict provides additional funding to the fire district and is assessed an additional 14.9 mill levy.
- The district and the northern subdistrict have almost the same boundaries. There is one enclave of property to the south that is in the fire district, but it is not in the northern subdistrict and is known as the "Southern Enclave" in this factual summary. See map inset.

Issues and proposal

- Property owners who are in the fire district and the northern subdistrict pay a total of 21.9 mills in property tax. Property owners in the Southern Enclave pay 7.0 mills in property tax because they are only in the fire district.
- The fire district and Monument Fire District (formerly known as Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District) are currently talking about merging. However, they cannot finalize a merger unless the northern subdistrict is dissolved and there is only one Donald Wescott Fire Agency.
- To solve the problem, the northern subdistrict decided to ask voters for approval to dissolve, and the fire district decided to ask voters for approval to increase its property tax to make up the lost revenue from the northern subdistrict dissolving. Both ballot measures will be on the Nov. 7, 2023 ballot.
- Most fire district property owners will receive a 0.5 mill property tax decrease if both ballot measures are approved. This is because if the northern subdistrict is dissolved, it will stop collecting its 14.9 mill property tax, but the fire district will only increase its

property tax by 14.4 mills, so there will be a 0.50 mill savings. DWFPD residents receiving services would be assessed 21.4 mills until the merger is completed.

- Approving the ballot measures would mean that everyone who receives emergency services from the fire district would pay the same rate. This is more equitable, especially to the property owners who are also in the northern subdistrict.
- The proposed merger with MFD depends on the ballot measures being approved. The merger is expected to provide better emergency services due to having more staff, stations, apparatus, coordinated training, and a more efficient administration. On completion a merger would also decrease most fire district property owners' taxes by another 3.0 mills, because MFD assesses 18.4 mills to the residents in its area of coverage.
- Approving the ballot measures will also help save money because it will reduce administrative costs by getting rid of duplicate layers of government and having only one fire agency.
- The Board of Directors urges voters to vote yes to dissolve the northern subdistrict and increase the fire district's (southern enclave) property tax in the Nov. 7 election.

Arguments against the proposal

- Voters in the southern enclave will pay the fire district's property tax increase but won't get tax savings from dissolving the northern subdistrict.
- Some voters might not want the fire district and MFD to merge, and the process is expected to continue if the ballot measures are approved.
- Some voters might want the fire district to provide a lower level of services, instead of increasing its property tax to offset the revenue that will be lost if the northern subdistrict dissolves.

Arguments for the proposal

- Most fire district property owners would get a 0.5 mill property tax decrease, because the fire district's property tax increase (14.4 mills) is less than the 14.9 mills that the northern subdistrict will stop collecting if it dissolves.
- The same tax rate would apply across the fire district's entire jurisdiction.
- Some voters may be in favor of having only one layer of government, which would lower administrative costs.
- Some voters might want the fire district and MFD to merge, the process of which is expected to continue if the ballot measures are approved. If a merger ultimately occurs, property taxes are expected to decrease by another 3.0 mills.

The board approved the district and subdistrict joint resolution of advocacy and the joint factual summary, 4-0.

Note: The complete factual summary can be found at <http://www.monumentfire.org>.

Public comment

Resident Gary Nelson said it would be helpful to know how much the residents would be saving per average home price should both ballot measures pass.

Powell said that until the results of the November election are known with regard to Proposition HH, the final property tax assessment rates for 2024 will be unknown, she said. See www.ocn.me/v23n6.htm#dwfpd.

Special District Solutions assistance

Powell recommended Kurt Schlegel of Special District Solutions (SDS) be hired to provide election-related technical services and support for the DWFPD subdistrict election. Schlegel has 17 years' experience and success with assisting other fire districts in Colorado with similar elections involving mergers. Schlegel will work with the DEO, district staff, and the county election officials from Sept. 8, when the ballot is certified, until the election is completed. The next step in the process is to approve the IGA on Aug. 29, she said.

The board approved hiring SDS to assist with the election process for a fee not to exceed \$12,000, 4-0.

Note: SDS services for the election proposals are expected to cost each district/subdistrict between \$3,000 and \$6,000. The actual cost for services will depend on the hours required, determined by the DEO and the Board of Directors.

2022 audit

Shani Cottrell of Erickson, Brown and Kloster, P.C., said she had worked closely and concurrently during the 2022 audits for DWFPD and MFD, with emphasis on the areas within the IGA. The transfer of capital assets (property, apparatus, and equipment) were reviewed and the depreciation estimates for the net pension assets complied with the Firefighters and Police Pension Association (FPPA) report. Ex-

ecution of the IGA went smoothly, and was handled very well, along with the adjustments to the IGA for assets transferred and the FPPA pension fund, and the typical property tax amendments, she said.

Last year, a management letter for some deficiencies with the accounting policies was issued, but this year nothing was required. Kovacs and Director of Administration Jennifer Martin, and the district accountants were super helpful during the process and are doing a good job. All financial statements for the merging districts should mirror each other, and they do, she said.

The board approved the 2022 audit with authorization for filing with the state auditor, 4-0.

Financial reports

Garrett requested the reason behind a significant jump in the balance from the May to June financial report.

Kovacs said the increase was due to the quarterly transfer of funds (\$782,941) to Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District dba MFD. The district is receiving fire and EMS service under the IGA for an annual fee of about \$3.1 million. See www.ocn.me/v23n4.htm#dwfpd.

The board approved by a 3-0 vote the financial reports for May and June as presented.

Chief's report

See the MFD article on page 11. The monthly chief's reports can be found at www.monumentfire.org.

The meetings adjourned at 5:52 p.m.

Meetings are usually held every other month on the fourth Wednesday of the month. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Sept. 27 at 4:30 p.m. at Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. For Zoom meeting 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.

Monument Fire District, June 28 and July 26
Mt. Herman Rd. fire suppressed;
2022 budget amended

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Monument Fire District (MFD) meeting on June 28, the board heard about the retirement of Battalion Chief Mike Dooley, received the 2022 audit presentation, and approved an extension to the Collaborative Working

Agreement (CBA). At the July 26 meeting, the board heard about a fire on Mount Herman Road and approved the 2022 audit and a resolution amending the 2022 budget. The board also approved the purchase of a chassis for the 2024 budgeted Type 6 brush truck and



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the Palmer Lake intergovernmental agreement (IGA) for ambulance services.

Secretary Jason Buckingham and Director Randall Estes were excused on June 28, with Director Tom Tharnish absent. Vice President John Hildebrandt attended via telephone.

Fire Chief Andy Kovacs and Director of Administration Jennifer Martin were absent for the June 28 board meeting.

All directors were in attendance on July 26, with President Mike Smaldino and Director Tom Tharnish attending via Zoom.

**Battalion Chief
Mike Dooley retires**



Division Chief of Operations Jonathan Bradley said Battalion Chief Mike Dooley had retired from the fire service after serving 40 years. Dooley plans to be a part of the department's history group to preserve the culture of the past. He served 30 years beginning with 10 years of volunteer firefighter service, Bradley said.

Smaldino thanked Dooley for his service.

Director Roger Lance said Dooley showed a lot of leadership, looking out for his crew, he made a difference within the department and the district, and he will be missed.

Mount Herman Road fire

Division Chief of Administration/Fire Marshal Jamey Bumgarner said a fire occurred on July 25 at around 6 a.m. about a mile south of Mount Herman Road from where the road forks with Red Rocks Drive. The mitigation efforts made over the past couple of years in

the area, removing scrub oak and thinning the pine canopy is definitely helpful, and the USDA Forest Service staff has plans to continue those mitigation efforts in the area, he said. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

Fire Chief Andy Kovacs said the district is glad to be taking part in the recently formed regional Type 6 Wildland Fire Strike Team. The goal of the team is to be on the road in 90 seconds; historically teams have responded in 45 minutes. If requested, the team could have been called to the Mount Herman fire. MFD sent two brush truck units, and Battalion Chief Micah Coyle noted the flames were visible from Highway 83 and Hodgen Road, he said.

2022 audit presentation

Mitchell Downs, partner at Erikson Brown and Kloster P.C., said he was the auditor in charge and performed the risk assessment. He instructed the directors on how to read the audit and informed the board that another amendment to the 2022 budget was necessary. This was because the district spent \$107,390 over budget after ordering two fire trucks that were placed on lease-purchase agreements. The trucks were on the balance sheet as an asset, but when the audit occurs, those assets are moved to expenses. Budgets are amended all the time and it is not a concern, he said. The district did not purposely overspend and the State Auditor's Office confirms it is acceptable to go back and amend the budget. The district's attorney, Linda Glesne, was notified and will issue a notice to amend the budget and approve the audit in the regular month of July, he said.

Shani Cottrell, CPA, said she focused on the IGA with Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD). Everything looked really clean and the transactions were recorded correctly, to include the files for the employee transfers. The books for both districts mirror exactly, and no adjustments were needed for the lease-purchase agreements. Three journal adjustment entries were made, one at the request of the district to add all the fixed assets from DWFPD. The executive staff was very helpful during the audit, she said.

Downs said less than five journal entries is normal and equates to a clean audit. It is very rare that nothing needs to be tweaked and the board can rely on the financial statements, he said.

Smaldino asked if the district can avoid an amendment again.

Bumgarner said the district is working with the contract accountants to understand how to alleviate the problem.

Hildebrandt said that in the past

the district violated Colorado law by overspending the budget, and it was quite a while ago, but he was always happy as treasurer to receive a statement saying the district did not violate the law and were within the parameters. The district is within the parameters although technically the district did violate the law, but the tower ladder engine asset has not been built yet, he said.

Note: The district purchased a stock engine for Station 4 and made a down payment to place the order for the tower ladder truck to be built in December 2022.

Lance said the district is saving money by purchasing in advance.

The district will be back within the parameters of the law after the budget is amended next month, said Bumgarner.

The board unanimously approved the 2022 audit on July 28.

Note: After a public hearing on the 2022 amended budget at the July meeting, the board approved resolution 2023-04 amending the 2022 budget to reflect increased expenditures and made a supplemental appropriation of additional sums of money to defray expenses, including the costs of additional capital expenditures for a total of \$107,390.

The board unanimously approved and adopted the amended 2022 budget.

**Meet and confer plus
agreement extension**

Bradley said the board had extended the meet and confer plus agreement with Local 4319 a couple of times this year. The relationship was working well and a decision had been reached to extend the agreement to buy some time until after the merger is completed.

Local 4319 President/Firefighter Christian Schmidt said the union supports the meet and confer plus agreement extension through Dec. 31, 2025. The agreement does not have a strike and lock-out provision.

The board approved the extension, 4-0.

Kovacs said legal counsel confirmed that all previous language preventing firefighter strikes due to collaborative working agreements still holds.

**Palmer Lake Inter-
governmental agreement**

Kovacs said the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees (PLBOT) would be discussing the revised IGA to provide EMS between MFD and Palmer Lake residents at the PLBOT board meeting on July 27. Glesne agreed with the revised document, with a recalculated fee structure, and only upon request by a Palmer Lake firefighter. Palmer Lake will be invoiced for additional calls beyond the number agreed upon in the IGA and be reimbursed if calls do not reach the agreed amount. A charge of \$575 per call will cover the ambulance and staffing, and the patient will be billed independently, as the district does for its residents. American Medical Response (AMR) will still be the primary responder for Palmer Lake, he said. See PLBOT article on page 9.

Bradley said AMR responds to about 350 calls for service to Palmer Lake per year, and typically the district responds to about 15 calls per year.

The board unanimously approved the revised IGA.

F550 chassis purchase

Bradley said the district has been switching vendors to find chassis for ambulances, but it can now purchase a 2023 Ford F550 chassis for \$69,360 and avoid an 18-month waiting list. The chassis was originally allocated to another department, and the district is budgeting for a Type 6 (brush truck) in 2024. He requested the board consider approving the purchase and in 2024 the district would need to pay only for the truck build, he said.

Bumgarner said Environmental

Protection Agency standards are about to change for fire engines, and new orders now take 30 months to build, with tenders estimated at 18 months before delivery. Purchasing the chassis ahead will allow the manufacturer to build the apparatus in six months and avoid increasing costs, he said.

Kovacs said the district is in the third year of waiting for the Type 3 apparatus, ordered mid-2021 and budgeted for 2022, with an expected delivery sometime in December.

The board unanimously approved the purchase.

**Training center and
facilities update**

Bumgarner said OZ Architects is working on the designs for the ultimate training center to be developed in phases. The redesigns for Stations 2, 4, and 5 are estimated to cost about \$82,928. The design for the new Station 3 will be an additional fee, he said.

Kovacs said the Station 4 (Glennagle Drive) will require sprinklers in the living areas, and that will add an expense to the remodel project. The district is still negotiating a land purchase for the Station 3 relocation, and in talks with the land owner of the Falcon Commerce Center for a potential future Station 6.

Buckingham asked about coverage for the increase in homes on the southwest side of Monument.

Kovacs said Station 4 covers that area, but as commercial development increases on the west side of I-25, coverage will need to be reassessed.

Financial report for June

Treasurer Tom Kelly said the district is at 50% of the budgeted amount and everything is tracking except impact fees that are about 23.7% of the predicted budget. Revenue is about \$10 million and 60.9% of the projected annual budget of about \$16.5 million. Expenses are within the normal range except the assisted benefits at 60% based upon not receiving the original estimates before approving the budget and adding vehicles to the fleet. Overall expenses year to date are about \$7.1 million, about 50.7% of the projected annual budget of about \$14 million, he said.

Martin said the district had made the first payment for the assisted benefits in December and seven months had been paid year to date.

The board accepted the June financial report as presented 7-0.

Note: Financial reports, the chief's report, and minutes can be found at www.monumentfire.org.

Technology request

Kovacs said that because some board directors attend the meetings virtually, discussions had taken place to purchase laptops or tablets to access board packets virtually. The district would own the devices and provide IT support, and hard copies could still be provided to directors. Information could also be shared in real time with the board directors.

Hildebrandt said having an additional device to review documents during meetings would be useful when attending remotely.

Kovacs said the staff would investigate the cost for the technology and present to the board at a future meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m. on June 28 and at 7:57 p.m. on July 26.

Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday of the month. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Aug. 23 at 6:30 p.m. at Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. For Zoom meeting 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.

Black Forest Fire/Rescue Fire Protection District, July 19

Virtual meeting unavailable

By Natalie Barszcz

An article on the Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD) board meeting for this edition was not possible because this reporter was unable to join the meeting via Zoom due to a password availability issue. After reaching out to the BFFRPD staff to request a password to join the meeting, a response was received the following morning stating, "The administrative staff would try to ensure future Zoom meetings are not password protected."

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, Aug. 16 at 7 p.m. For joining instructions, updates, agendas, minutes, and reports, visit www.bffire.org or contact Director of Public Relations Brooke Reid at admin@bffire.org or call 719-495-4300.

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



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Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, July 17 and 25

Board president resigns; board reorganizes

By James Howald
The Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) board met twice in July. At the regularly scheduled meeting, board President Barrie Town resigned, citing health reasons, which led to a special meeting on July 25 to fill the vacated seat and reorganize the board. The board heard a presentation on Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)—sometimes called “forever chemicals”—and considered awarding a contract for the district’s portion of the project to widen Highway 105.

District Manager Jessie Shaffer presented a mid-year budget update. The board considered the results of the acoustic evaluation of its pipelines, as well as operational reports. The regularly scheduled board meeting ended with an executive session.

Board appoints new member and reorganizes

Town opened the July 17 regular meeting by announcing his resignation, effective July 19, telling the board he was doing so reluctantly at the advice of his doctor. He said two residents had expressed an interest in being appointed to replace him: Jim Taylor, who had served on the WWSD board previously, and Wendy Fisher, an employee of a local bank who wanted to contribute to the community.

At the July 25 special meeting, board Treasurer Roy Martinez said WWSD was at a critical point in its history due to its participation in the El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority (EPCRLWA) which, if implemented, would solve the problem of how to make the water purchased along with the Woodmoor Ranch property near Fountain Creek available to district customers. Martinez said the board needed qualified candidates for appointment who were familiar with district history and issues and who could hit the ground running. Martinez nominated Brian Bush for the vacant seat.

Bush has previously served two terms on the WWSD board as president. He could not run in the last election, since board members can only be elected twice, but the law allows him to be appointed for an additional term. Bush has a background in water law and was president during the recent upgrades to the Lake Pump Station and the Central Water Treatment Plant.

The board voted unanimously to appoint Bush to the vacant seat.

Following Bush’s appointment, the board held elections to reorganize its officers. Bush was elected to serve as board president. Bill Clewe, the incumbent secretary, was re-elected to that post. Martinez was re-elected to continue as treasurer.

Remedy for PFAS uncertain

District Engineer Ariel Hacker gave the board a presentation on PFAS, focusing on the many uncertainties about how they will be addressed. She said PFAS are manmade chemicals that were first introduced in the 1940s and have now become ubiquitous. PFAS occur in non-stick cookware, clothing, cosmetics, paint, furniture, cleaning products, fire-fighting foam, and many other products. They are sometimes called “forever chemicals” because they break down slowly. PFAS have found their way into water systems, the soil, and aquifers and this cycle will continue as long as they are in the products we buy. They are linked to many serious illnesses,

including cancers, Hacker said. Hacker mentioned a large-scale study done 15 years ago that showed PFAS were linked to thyroid disease, high cholesterol, as well as kidney and testicular cancer.

Hacker mentioned that fire-fighting foam used at Peterson Air Force Base has contaminated drinking water in Widefield, Security, and Fountain, causing those communities to shut down wells and to find ways of removing the chemicals from drinking water. The City of Fountain installed a Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) treatment system, partially funded by Peterson Air Force Base.

Hacker emphasized that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has not yet completely defined standards for PFAS in drinking water. In spring 2021, the EPA issued regulations for perfluorooctanoic acid and perfluorooctane sulfate and announced it would evaluate the family of PFAS for regulatory action. That evaluation is still underway, she said.

In response to a question from District Manager Jessie Shaffer about potential regulation, Operation Superintendent Dan LaFontaine said the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment would regulate PFAS in the state of Colorado. When and how they will do so is unclear, he said.

Shaffer said in addition to GAC there are other technologies to remove PFAS, including anionic exchange systems and biological activated carbon. WWSD needs to begin financial planning for implementing PFAS remediation, he said. He pointed out the towns of Security and Fountain have implemented systems that have led to undetectable levels of PFAS. LaFontaine said WWSD is already testing for PFAS and levels are undetectable, mostly because there are no wastewater streams above WWSD.

By Jackie Burhans and James Howald

At its July meeting, the Monument Sanitation District (MSD) board heard an operational report and a financial report from General Manager Mark Parker and briefly discussed two issues that were tabled until the next board meeting.

Manager’s report

Parker updated the board on a

Construction contract awarded

Hacker told the board that the first round of bidding to complete WWSD’s portion of El Paso County’s project to widen Highway 105 between Jackson Creek Parkway and Lake Woodmoor Drive had produced a single bid, which was \$185,000 over the engineer’s estimate. This led WWSD to re-bid the work, she said.

Richard Hood of JVA Inc., a consulting company that advises WWSD, said the project to widen the highway will impact raw and potable water lines, requiring them to be moved. He said the second round of bidding produced three bids, with Wildcat Construction being the low bidder at \$1.12 million, a bid \$60,000 under the engineer’s estimate. He recommended awarding the contract to Wildcat Construction.

Shaffer pointed out that Wildcat Construction was chosen by El Paso County to do the county’s portion of the project, so it would make the project go more smoothly if WWSD also selected it.

The board voted unanimously to award the contract to Wildcat Construction.

Midyear budget update

Shaffer gave the board an updated budget for 2023 and said he would address the largest changes in his remarks.

On the revenue side, the biggest change was a reduction in anticipated tap fees, which were reduced from \$4 million to \$1.6 million. Higher interest rates slowed new construction, Shaffer said, which led to fewer new connections to the district’s water and sewer services. Slower development also led to a reduction of revenue from supplemental water: \$752,510 in supplemental water fees was budgeted, but that was lowered to \$99,842 in the mid-year budget. The unusually rainy spring and summer months lowered water user fees, he said.

Shaffer said the district spent only \$250,000 of the \$500,000 it had budgeted to participate in the EPCRLWA water re-use project.

On a positive note, Shaffer said the higher interest rates had doubled the interest the district receives on its financial reserves, raising it from \$500,000 to \$1 million.

On the expenditure side, Shaffer said the district spent \$75,000 more than expected to repair hardware problems with wells. Costs associated with the project to widen Highway 105 and the project to replace worn out sewer saddles were higher than originally budgeted. Capital improvement projects were budgeted at \$5.8 million, but only \$5.4 million of that will be spent in 2023, he said.

Shaffer said he expected to end 2023 with \$19.6 million in unrestricted reserves.

The board accepted the updated budget without a vote.

Acoustic evaluation a time saver

Earlier in the year, the district hired RH Borden to help it evaluate the state of its sewer collection pipes. In previous years, district employees had cleaned sewer pipes based on a schedule, cleaning 20 percent of the sewer pipes each year, moving through the entire service area on a five-year schedule. This method meant some time and resources were used cleaning pipes that really did not need service.

Shaffer explained that RH Borden had developed a new technology that uses sound waves to quickly identify pipes that are clear, partially blocked, or totally blocked. Shaffer said the original proposal was for RH Borden to evaluate one-fourth to one-half of the district’s sewer lines, but RH Borden was able to evaluate all the sewer lines with the funds allocated. Shaffer said he was surprised at how quickly RH Borden got through 80 miles of pipeline.

Kwin Peterson of RH Borden said in five weeks his team opened every manhole in the district, did an evaluation of each manhole, evaluated every pipe segment, and recorded all the data for entry into WWSD’s Geographic Information System database for later use. His team found 87% of the pipes did not need cleaning, allowing the district to focus only on the pipes that truly needed cleaning.

LaFontaine said this was the first time the district had a full assessment of all manholes. He estimated the new technology saved the district 3 to 3 1/2 months of labor and equipment usage.

Highlights of operational reports

- LaFontaine said the rainy spring and summer had led to stormwater infiltrating the sewer collection system through manholes, which increased the flows in the Tri-Lakes Waste Water Treatment Facility.
- The district’s project to replace existing water meters with more advanced units is ongoing.
- Well 12 is out of service due to a pump failure.
- The Cloverleaf development has qualified for conditional acceptance.

Executive session

The July 17 meeting ended with an executive session to confer with legal counsel on questions relating to the EPCRLWA and on the authority to set fees.

The next meeting is scheduled for Aug. 14 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, July 19

Good news on Highway 105 sewer repair

repair needed on a sewer line that serves the Conoco gas station, the McDonald’s restaurant, and Jarrito Loco. The line runs under Highway 105, and at the previous meeting Parker said the line was 14 feet underground and if the repair required the line to be excavated traffic on the highway would be impacted. At the July meeting, Parker said following a discussion with engineers he

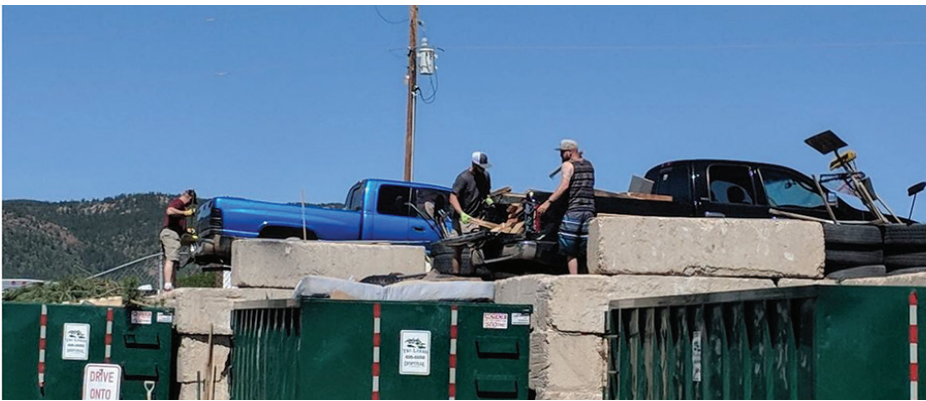
believed the repair could be made by lining the pipe without digging it up.

Parker said he had signed up the district to participate in CoWARN, a statewide water and wastewater response network. CoWARN facilitates mutual aid between utilities to resolve emergency situations, he said, adding that membership does not obligate members to offer or accept aid.



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are connections to the district's wastewater collection system, and was seeing lower revenue from tap fees, which are one of the ways infrastructure improvements are funded. He said there was plenty of sewer and treatment capacity, so scarcity of water would be the factor limiting the demand

for new sewer taps.

Items tabled

A decision to accept the employee handbook was tabled so that it could be updated to comply with new state laws. A review of district bylaws was also tabled.

June meeting update

Following the executive session held at the end of the previous board meeting, the board voted unanimously in favor of an 8.5% raise for Parker. This vote was not officially announced until after the July issue of OCN had gone to press.

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 Aug. 16. See <https://colorado.gov/msd>. For a dis-

trict 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.

Triview Metropolitan District, July 20

Stonewall Springs Reservoir operational; Conexus Subdistrict dissolved; 2022 budget amended

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Triview Metropolitan District (TMD) meeting on July 20, the board heard about the Stonewall Springs Reservoir operations, approved the dissolution of Subdistrict B, amended the 2022 budget, received a presentation on the 2022 audit, received multiple updates, and held an executive session to receive legal advice on water and property acquisitions, and the Higby Road design.

Vice President Anthony Sexton and Director Jason Gross attended via telephone.

Director Amanda Carlton did not attend.

Stonewall Springs Reservoir is operational

District Manager James McGrady said the district acquired the 1041 permit from Pueblo County, which is necessary to operate exchanges of water at the Stonewall Springs Reservoir. The district is now exchanging water regionally using the new pump station, and the reservoir is full. The renewable water program is an accomplishment for TMD and the entire region, he said. See NEPCO article on page 18.

Water attorney Chris Cummins said the filling of a reservoir generates a great deal of interest, because it is not an everyday happening. See photo above.

Note: The July newsletter is available at www.triviewmetro.com.

Subdistrict B dissolution

McGrady said when the district put together Subdistrict B for the Conexus development located west of I-25 off Old Denver Road, Monument, the district was unsure at the time that Conexus would be able to set up its own metropolitan district, but that has now occurred, and Conexus feels it will have sufficient bond capacity to complete the project. See www.ocn.me/v23n6.htm#tmd.

Gross said it seems the district would be taking a tool out of its tool kit, and why would the district get rid Subdistrict B before Conexus has built out its development? he asked.

McGrady said that Conexus can impose 35 mills for the



Above: Triview Metropolitan District's Stonewall Springs South Reservoir on July 20. The reservoir was full to capacity by mid-July and holds enough water to supply the district for two years. Photo courtesy of James McGrady.

operation and management of its new development. TMD currently imposes 24 mills of its allowed 35 mills to its customers and could only issue 11 mills to Conexus. He had a conversation with the developer and was assured they would not need Subdistrict B. If Conexus is making the wrong decision, it will have to make it work, he said.

Gross asked if the development posed any potential risk to TMD.

McGrady said the Conexus development west of I-25 is not integral to the district, and the roads and pipeline are located on the periphery of the district. The Town of Monument (TOM) collected a performance bond from the developer before the construction begins to protect against abandonment of the project. TMD inspects all the water and wastewater pipelines and Tom Martinez of Monument Public Works inspects the road and stormwater infrastructure. The work is warrantied for two years, and then a punch list is completed to ensure the final infrastructure is to code. The district employs extremely qualified staff with 20-plus years of experience to inspect water and wastewater infrastructure, to include the Northern Delivery System pipeline project

The district's attorney, George Rowley, said there is no negative should Conexus fail to complete infrastructure, because it is required to install the infrastructure before any

residents move in. Rowley requested the board review and approve Resolution 2023-05, a resolution of the TMD Board of Directors acting at the request of the property owners, Conexus developers Schuck-Chapman, to dissolve Subdistrict B and authorize the district staff and the district legal team to prepare documents, make filings, and consummate the dissolution of it.

The board approved Resolution 2023-05, 4-0.

2022 budget amendment

President Mark Melville opened a public hearing for the proposed 2022 budget amendment.

District Accountant Cathy Fromm explained the required amendments for the 2022 budget and said the General Fund/Capital Projects Fund was amended by \$195,206 due to additional capital projects, and the Enterprise Fund was amended to show an increase of about \$3.9 million. The increases were due to capital projects and over \$300,000 in additional meters that were ordered in 2021 but received in 2022. The additions are required to be reported in the year received, she said.

Melville said a revised budget approval occurs every year after the auditors and accounts have conducted the audit, and hearing no public comments closed the public hearing.

McGrady requested the board review and approve Resolution 2023-04, a reso-

lution of the TMD Board of Directors amending the 2022 budget.

The board approved the 2022 budget amendments, 4-0.

2022 audit

Christine McCleod of Haynie and Co. CPA presented the 2022 audit and said no significant weaknesses or deficiencies had occurred. The audit was substantially completed but still in draft form, and once complete the report will be filed on time with an unmodified opinion. The district has a strong set of financials with nothing outside of normal accounting procedures, she said. McCleod recommended the Higby Road escrow account be moved to reflect a liability account on the balance sheet for correct financial presentation purposes.

The board approved the 2022 Audited Financial Statements as presented, subject to review and any changes, and the filing with the state, 4-0.

Financial update

Secretary James Barnhart requested clarification on the overbudget vehicle expense line discussed at the June board meeting. See www.ocn.me/v23n7.htm#tmdandthecorrection at the end of this article.

Fromm said the fuel charges will be moved to the fuel line item, and other charges will be scheduled to the correct accounts. The district had a lot of Les Schwab charges for tires this year and \$660 for the Vehicle Expense line in the General Fund for Public

Works, was really underbudgeted, she said.

McGrady said the district truly underbudgeted the line item, with gas expenses charged to that line, and many pieces and parts needed for vehicles this year.

The board accepted the financial report as presented, and approved the checks issued over \$5,000.

NDS pipeline project update

McGrady said Kiewit was doing a great job, and the NDS pipelines were expected to be tied together in late July. The crews will begin working on the east portion of Baptist Road overnight to avoid traffic congestion. All materials for the project have been received (except for the pump station), and the pipeline will be installed by mid-September, with the overlay expected to take place from late September through mid-October, he said.

Note: For NDS pipeline project updates, alternate traffic routes, answers to questions, and to sign-up for email notifications, visit www.triviewnds.com. The link can also be found at www.triviewmetro.com.

Public Works and Parks and Open Space update

Superintendent Matt Rayno said:

- The Remington Hill overlay project was scheduled to be completed by Martin Marietta on July 22.
- Staff members are completing the last section of the trail system at Agate Creek Park.
- A concrete pad at Old Creek Park had been installed, and a shade structure and picnic table will be added to the pad in August.
- Radar speed signs have been ordered for a total of about \$7,400. The signs will be installed on northbound Gleneagle Drive at the Promontory Pointe Trail Park, and southbound Gleneagle Drive just after the roundabout after exiting Sanctuary Rim.

Resident Ann-Marie Jojola thanked the district for installing radar speed signs along Gleneagle Drive in Promontory Pointe and said there are a lot of curves and motorists gain momentum. There have been some close calls with children crossing the road, she said.

McGrady said the road has a steep grade, and children do not have the sight distance to navigate the speed of oncoming vehicles.

Sidewalk repair matching program

McGrady said the district is responsible for curb and gutter repairs, but for sidewalks a concrete matching program of \$1,000 per home to fix sidewalks exists. The district budgets \$25,000 annually for the program and currently has \$50,000 to match homeowner sidewalk repairs. Residents interested in the sidewalk repair matching program should contact Assistant Manager Steve Sheffield at ssheffield@triviewmetro.com or call 719-



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Re-opening of open space

McGrady said he and Rayno had walked the open space north of the Lyons Tail Road and south of the Talus Road playground and found the space was now free of trash and in great shape compared to about a year ago, when activities such as underage drinking, evidence of fire pits, scrub oak chopped with axes and fort building activity had been taking place. Back then the board examined alternatives after receiving resident complaints and made the area off-limits. The area is now looking pristine with no signs of damage, and he recommended the board consider re-opening the single-lane foot path and open space with monitoring, and new signs asking users to please respect this open space.

The neighbor that had originally requested the district take action in June 2022 to protect the open space said he had not requested the closure, but due to the closure a rock had been thrown through his window last year. He concurred the space looked good now, and he and his wife were in favor of the space being re-opened, as long as it is monitored. In the past he had observed a female teenager tear off a branch from the 100-year-old Gambel oak shrubs.

Residents attending in support of re-opening

the space said they and another neighbor would be watching to ensure the open space users are not causing damage or engaging in dangerous behavior.

Melville thanked the homeowners in attendance and said the board regrets the decision it made to close the open space, but he hoped the children present at the meeting could go and enjoy the open space with their neighbors. See the TMD board meeting minutes from June 23, 2022 at www.triviewmetro.com.

Note: OCN did not cover the complaint that led to the closure because the July 2022 edition did not cover the TMD board meeting. Subsequently, the board meeting minutes and the district newsletter did not refer to the homeowners by name in response to the complaint.

Grass grant for open spaces

Resident Melissa Simonoff requested the board consider applying for the state's \$2 million grant available to municipalities for 2023-24 for lawn removal and replacement in public spaces. It could be used for the enhancement of the open spaces in Jackson Creek, she said.

McGrady said that in years past the grant was available only for residential purposes and a very small amount of money was available. He requested Simonoff forward the information to him for further consideration.

Melville thanked Simonoff for the information

El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority, July 20

Board hires project manager

By James Howald

At its July meeting, the El Paso County Loop Regional Water Authority (EPCRLWA) board executed a contract with Merrick and Co. to receive project management and workflow services. The board heard the results of water quality testing and voted to send a representative to the Colorado Water Conference (CWC).

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 Creeks to be stored at Calhan Reservoir at Woodmoor Ranch and then pumped back north to be used by customers of the participating districts.

Details of project management contract decided

Russ Dykstra of Spencer Fane LLC, the legal firm representing EPCRLWA, told the board he had completed negotiations with Merrick on an agreement under which that company will provide project planning and workflow management services to EPCRLWA. An attachment to the agreement specifies Merrick will:

- Refine the business model and operations schema for the project.
- Develop and execute necessary legal documents

including operating agreements, water supply leases, supply limitations and curtailment procedures, and financing agreements.

- Develop requests for proposals for engineering services.
- Select and onboard consultants and specialized professionals.

Dykstra added either side can terminate the agreement at any time with 30 days' notice.

Jessie Shaffer, the president of the EPCRLWA Board of Directors, pointed out that the agreement limits Merrick to no more than \$350,000 over a nine-month term ending April 19, 2024.

Jeff Hodge, the secretary of the EPCRLWA board, mentioned that he thought John Kuosman of Merrick should be introduced to politicians representing the EPCRLWA service area, such as Rep. Don Wilson, Sen. Paul Lundeen, and County Commissioners Holly Williams and Carrie Geitner.

The board voted unanimously to execute the agreement with Merrick.

Water quality tests proceed

Richard Hood, of JVA Inc., the company EPCRLWA has hired to assess water quality and design the water treatment aspects of the project, updated the board on the latest round of water quality tests. He covered tests of water taken from Fountain Creek in May and June. The quality was good overall, Hood said. He noted a spike in flow following a rainstorm that led to increased turbidity, higher coliform bacteria counts,

and said the board would look into the request.

Executive session

The board moved into executive session at 7:58 p.m., pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes 24-6-402(4) (a), (b), (e), to discuss acquisitions, receive legal advice on negotiations regarding water acquisitions, change cases, property acquisition negotiations, and the Higby Road design.

After the meeting, Sheffield confirmed that no further actions were taken when the board returned to the regular meeting and promptly adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Correction

In the financial update portion of the June TMD article www.ocn.me/v23n7.htm#tmd, it should have read: "Vehicle expenses were \$7,261, and 1100% over the budgeted \$660 in the May 2023 financial report." OCN regrets the error.

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

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

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

At its July meeting, the Donala Water and Sanitation District (DWSD) board honored previous board member Ken Judd for his long service to the district. It launched a usage-based billing system for sewer service. General Manager Jeff Hodge detailed water sales over the last 10 years and discussed the impact of the exceptionally high rainfall seen in recent months on the district's finances.

The board voted on two resolutions: the first committing to participation in the El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority (EPCRLWA) and the second initiating planning for adding direct potable reuse (DPR) to the district's portfolio of water assets. Hodge updated the board on water quality issues, focusing on radium removal. The regular board meeting was preceded by a workshop devoted to the Upper Monument Creek Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility (UMCRWWTF), including a tour of the facility. The regular meeting ended with an executive session.

Judd receives Water Drop

Current board President Wayne Vanderschuere presented Judd with DWSD's Water Drop award in appreciation of his long service to the district and its customers. In May, the board passed a resolution honoring Judd for serving as the board president, working on district financing, contributing to 10 district budgets, planning mill levy override campaigns, and negotiating with surrounding districts. Previous DWSD board President Ed Houle was present to see Judd accept the award. Judd's granddaughter from Ireland also attended the ceremony.

Usage-based sewer billing starts in July

Billing Administrator Ashley Uhrin updated the board on DWSD's new sewer billing methodology. Beginning July 1, DWSD's flat fee of \$40.54 per month for sewer service was replaced with a base fee of \$6.90 plus a consumption-based charge of \$8.94 per 1,000 gallons of wastewater produced. This change affects residential customers only. The consumption-based charge is calculated once a year based on average water consumption during December, January, and February, which is assumed to be equal to the amount of wastewater produced, since no irrigation is done during those months. Snowbird customers will be billed the district average for water service during the winter months, calculated at 3,500 gallons per month.

The new charges will be on August bills, Uhrin said. In response to a question from Director Bill George, Hodge said sewer revenue is estimated to re-

Donala Water and Sanitation District, July 20

Board honors Judd, changes sewer billing



Above: At its July board meeting, Donala board President Wayne Vanderschuere, right, presented the coveted Water Drop award to former board member Kenneth Judd, left. Judd, who resigned in May, was honored for his long service on the board, including a stint as board president. Judd had worked on district financing, contributed to 10 district budgets, planned mill levy override campaigns, and negotiated with surrounding districts. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

main more or less equal to the revenue produced by the previous flat fee.

More details about the usage-based rates can be found in the Jan. 1, 2022 issue of OCN, which reported on a presentation from Roger Sams of GMS Engineering Inc. that covers the assumptions and goals of the new methodology. Sams' presentation can be found online here: <https://www.ocn.me/v22n1.htm#dwsd>.

Rainy weather reduces water revenue

Hodge told the board that the high amount of rain the last few months has reduced customer demand for water and lowered DWSD's revenue from water sales. He showed the board a graph of water usage by month for the last 10 years that showed the water usage for June 2023 to be the lowest usage in June for the last 10 years. The highest June usage was in June 2013. He said low water usage was also estimated for July and possibly for August and forecasted a \$754,236 deficit in water sales from what was budgeted for 2023.

Hodge said he did not believe the district would need to use funds from its reserves to meet operating costs. He pointed out that the low demand also meant

the district would have to pay Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) less to convey, treat, and deliver the district's water to its customers, so there are some savings on the expense side.

Vanderschuere said he expected wholesale electrical costs to increase by 7% next year. He added that Hodge's graph confirmed CSU's prediction that the standard deviation in weather events was increasing, with higher highs and lower lows for precipitation and temperature.

Water Operator Ronny Wright told the board the rainfall had led to excess water in storage, which he was trying to sell or store somewhere other than the Pueblo Reservoir, where DWSD can store up to 499 acre-feet of water. DWSD currently is above that limit, he said. Hodge said that if DWSD had its planned aquifer storage and retrieval (ASR) technology in place, that excess water could be stored for future consumption.

Resolutions passed

The board voted unanimously to pass Resolution 2023-7, which defines how and why DWSD will participate in the EPCRLWA, a large-scale water re-use project in which DWSD partners with Cherokee Metropolitan District, the Town of Monument, and Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District. Specifically:

- DWSD will have an equal vote with the other participants.
- EPCRLWA is in the best interest of DWSD customers.
- EPCRLWA provides local control of rates, costs, and operations.
- EPCRLWA is intended to provide affordable recaptured water.
- EPCRLWA will allow DWSD to use its water rights on Fountain Creek.

The board also voted unanimously in favor of Resolution 2023-8, which commits DWSD to initiating a long-term project to implement DPR technology that meets Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Regulation No. 11. DPR is defined as: "a series of processes that produce finished drinking water using a source containing treated wastewater that has not passed through an environmental buffer." The regulation, which was recently passed by the state Legislature, includes monitoring and treatment protocols. The district's plans for DPR are aligned with its plans to implement ASR. The next step will be to establish baseline values for DPR, Vanderschuere



Above: On July 20, the Donala Water and Sanitation District held a workshop and tour at the Upper Monument Creek Regional Waste Water Treatment Facility before its board meeting. General Manager Jeff Hodge provided a brief overview of the

said. Hodge stressed that the implementation of DPR would be a long journey.

Progress on radium removal

Hodge told the board that rehabilitating three filters in the Holbein water treatment plant had reduced radium to below the state’s limit. DWSD is now in a position to ask El Paso County for American Recovery Plan Act funds to reimburse it for the costs of radium removal. DWSD is working to implement hydrous manganese oxide (HMO) treatment to further mitigate radium, and some of the required hardware should arrive in the August to September timeframe. Hodge said he expected to have the HMO treatment process in place by November.

treatment facility operations, and Plant Operator Aaron Tolman led a tour of the facilities, including the three sequencing batch reactor basins. From left, the first basin is aerated by blowers to provide oxygen for the microorganisms that process the

Workshop tours treatment facility

The regular board meeting was preceded by a workshop at the UMCRRWTF that included an overview of the treatment facility operations by Hodge and a tour of the facility led by Waste Plant Operator Aaron Tolman.

Executive session

The meeting ended with an executive session to receive legal advice concerning negotiations regarding the UMCRRWTF Intergovernmental Agreement.

The next meeting is scheduled for Aug. 17 at 1:30 p.m. Generally, board meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at 1:30 p.m. and include online access; call (719) 488-3603 or access www.donalawater.org

incoming wastewater; the second basin is in settle/decant mode, and the third basin is undergoing repairs. *Photos by Jackie Burhans.*

org to receive up-to-date meeting information. The district office is located at 15850 Holbein Drive, Colorado Springs.

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El Paso County Planning Commission, July 6

Request to split Woodmoor property into four lots recommended for approval

By Marlene Brown and Helen Walklett

At the July 6 meeting, the El Paso County Planning Commission heard a replat application to return a single lot property in Woodmoor to four lots. They also heard final plat applications for The Winsome and Terra Ridge North developments and a minor subdivision application for a Black Forest property. All four applications were scheduled to be heard at the El Paso Board of County Commissioners’ (BOCC) land use meeting on Aug. 1.

Woodmoor property replat recommended for approval

At the July 6 meeting, the commissioners voted unanimously to recommend for approval a subdivision request which would see a Woodmoor property divided into four lots. The 3.81-acre property at 1384 Buckwood Lane near its intersection with Fawnwood Road is zoned RR-0.5 (residential rural) and was originally platted as four lots in 1963. The current single lot was created in 2010.

The replat would create four lots that conform to the RR-0.5 zoning. The residence on the east and central portion of the property would remain.

Property owner Tim Murphy of Murphy’s Custom Homes Inc. showed the hearing that he has written approval from the Woodmoor Improvement Association’s (WIA) Architectural Control Committee and commitment letters from the utility companies.

The application was pulled from the consent calendar for a full hearing due to neighbor objection. Chair Thomas Bailey stressed to the audience that the replat criteria outlined by staff are the only points that the commission can consider when making its recommendation and asked that public comment be specifically addressed to those criteria.

Four neighbors, representing a larger group, spoke in opposition and raised concerns about increased wildfire risk, the impact on wildlife, geological hazards, traffic and congestion, and soil and drainage issues.

Neighbor Erin Duran said they had presented on several occasions to the WIA and commented, “They (the WIA) were very forthright in saying they were going to approve it because the Board of County Commissioners makes the ultimate decision and that they did not feel that their decision would weigh in at all.”

Sarah Cole stated that the justifications put forward in 2010 for the combining of the lots are still very relevant issues in Woodmoor today. Arguments put forward at that time included that the development caused erosion in steep sloped areas, disturbed natural drainage patterns, and caused congestion on roads that were not suitable for increased traffic. It was also noted that some lots were only marginally buildable due to the slope and floodplains.

Hilary and Bill Brendemuhl also spoke, voicing concerns about the WIA’s procedures and decision-making process. Hilary Brendemuhl said, “Our board has a history, unfortunately, and it’s documented, of making arbitrary and capricious decisions.”

Bailey commented, “A lot of the concerns are something that we don’t have any authority over. A lot of your problems seem to be with your association.”

Commissioner Christopher Whitney said, “Obviously you have a beef with your HOA (Homeowners Association), and whether the HOA behaved correctly is between you and them.”

Vessey Road minor subdivision

The commissioners heard a minor subdivision request to create three single-family lots on a 14-acre Black Forest property west of the intersection of Vessey Road and Black Forest Road and south of the intersection of Vessey Road and Pine Crest Drive. The application was unanimously recommended for approval as a consent item, meaning there was no dis-

cussion.

The property was rezoned from RR-5 to RR-2.5 by the BOCC in June. See www.ocn.me/v23n7.htm#epbocc

Terra Ridge North final plat

The commissioners voted unanimously to recommend for approval a final plat application by Phillip Miles for 11 single-family residential lots. The Terra Ridge North application includes a replat of two existing single-family residential lots to provide access to the new lots. The 51.65-acre property is south of the intersection of Black Forest Road and Hodgen Road.

The land was rezoned from RR-5 to RR-2.5 in 2022. Neighbors spoke to voice objections at both the Planning Commission and BOCC hearings at that time. See www.ocn.me/v22n9.htm#epccpcandwww.ocn.me/v22n10.htm#epbocc.

The final plat application was heard as a consent item, meaning there was no discussion. It could have been pulled for a full hearing if any member of the public had wished to address the commission about it.

Winsome final plat

The commissioners heard a final plat application for Winsome Filing No. 3 to create 38 single-family residential lots and five tracts on the 349.47-acre property zoned RR-5 at the northwest corner of Hodgen Road and Meridian Road.

The BOCC approved the Winsome preliminary plan in July 2019. The development encompasses 766.66 acres and consists of 143 residential lots, one commercial lot, open space, drainage tracts, and public rights-of-way. The plan was amended in 2021 to increase the lots to 146. These three additional lots are located within Filing No. 3.

Ahead of the vote, Commissioner Christopher Whitney voiced his concern about findings of water sufficiency in general when no one really knows how long water may be available in the Denver Basin, saying “I guess I just want to express for the record that it troubles me that we’re basically saying to people, “Yep, there’s adequate water today but be careful because we can’t tell you what will happen tomorrow” and I don’t know what the solution to that is but it’s worrisome.”

The vote to recommend the application for approval was unanimous.

The El Paso County Planning Commission’s next meeting is scheduled for Aug. 17. Normally EPCPC meets on the first and third Thursdays at the Regional Development Center, 2880 International Circle, Colorado Springs. Meetings are live-streamed on the El Paso County News & Information Channel at <https://www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel>. For more information, see <https://planningdevelopment.elpasoco.com>.

Marlene Brown can be reached at marlenebrown@ocn.me. Helen Walklett can be reached at helenwalklett@ocn.me.

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El Paso Board of County Commissioners, June 27, July 11 and 18

Board receives Monument annexation impact report

By Marlene Brown and Helen Walklett
At the July 11 El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) meeting, the commissioners received an annexation impact report from the Town of Monument concerning land south of County Line Road.

Monument Ridge East and West annexation

An annexation impact report from the Town of Monument was received by the commissioners at their July 11 meeting. The BOCC cannot approve or deny an annexation report; it serves to notify it of the annexation request and sets out potential impacts in general terms. The Monument Ridge East and West annexation concerns 160 acres of land south of and abutting County Line

Road between Beacon Lite Road on the west and Misty Acres Boulevard on the east. Accepting the report, the commissioners directed staff to comment that the BOCC expects the Town of Monument to annex Beacon Lite Road once the planned improvements to it are completed.

The annexation was scheduled to be heard by the Monument Town Council in July. See the Monument Town Council article on page 1.

Support for Monument pumpkin patch business

Local resident Bill Denim spoke in the public comment period of the June 27 meeting in support the Colorado Pumpkin Patch, a Monument business. He said it was his understanding that the business is being threatened by a com-

plaint about the traffic it generates. It's located on a working farm off Highway 105 and operates for about six weeks every year.

Denim said the business has tremendous value and it brings in a lot of money for the county, provides families with a fun fall activity, and operates a nonprofit allowing families with special needs children to enjoy the pumpkin patch for free. He urged the commissioners to support it.

New property assessments

At the July 18 meeting, Mark Flutcher, county assessor, spoke about new property assessments. There have been 33,724 appeals in El Paso County, which is about 12 percent of total real property assessments that went out to the

property owners. About 16,467 assessments were adjusted, for a total of about \$1.9 billion reduced. About 6.7 percent of the total bills were reduced, which Flutcher stated "is in line with past years' average."

Flutcher said his office has been working with the state and is in line with the statutes that were put in place this year, and it does not have the authority to cap reassessments. Flutcher had gone to the state capitol to support a bill to cap assessment increases at 10 percent, but that bill was shot down in committee. Preliminary audit results could not be shared until the State Equalization Board approved the audit.

All the commissioners except Vice Chair Carrie Geitner attended National Association of Counties (NACo) Annual

Conference & Expo in Austin, Texas on July 21-24. The conference is the largest meeting of county elected and appointed officials in the country. NACo helps to shape federal policy and share proven practices and learn about the latest trends in county government roles.

The meeting was adjourned after 25 minutes.

The next BOCC meeting is scheduled for 9 a.m. Aug. 8. View agendas and meetings at www.agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso. Meetings are held at Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade Ave, Suite 150, Colorado Springs.

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Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Organizations, July 22

NEPCO hears about renewable water projects

By Jackie Burhans
The Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Organizations (NEPCO) held its general membership bi-monthly meeting on July 22 at the Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) Barn community center. NEPCO has 49 member associations representing over 10,000 homes and 20,000 registered voters within its focus area, which extends from the foothills to the west to just past Highway 83 on the east and from County Line Road on the north of El Paso County to Shoup Road on the south. NEPCO also has two individual members, two business members, and six honorary associate members, including Our Community News.

NEPCO's purpose is to protect property rights; encourage beautification, planned development, and maintenance by government agencies; provide a forum for the free exchange of ideas; and serve as an area-wide point of contact regarding land use matters.

NEPCO conducted board business and heard committee reports, reported on the Monument Ridge annexation, and heard presentations on "Water Issues and Future Renewable Water in the NEPCO Region," followed by a panel discussion.

Board business and committee reports

President Mike Aspenson announced that Bob Mooney, chair of the Transportation and Land Use Committee, would be retiring soon. He asked that anyone interested

in the leadership position to contact any board member by their position (e.g., president@nepco.org) or contact Mooney at bobmooney01@msn.com or at 719-930-9735. No experience is necessary as NEPCO will provide guidance and training, he said.

Vice President Bob Swendenburg noted that homeowners associations (HOAs) are struggling with the increase in HOA insurance costs for their boards. He found an insurance company with good rates that is reaching out to HOAs and recommended contacting Dwayne Thomas of American Family Insurance.

Monument Ridge annexation update

Harold Larson, member at large, reported that in 2017, the Town of Monument made a comprehensive plan that looked at contiguous areas it might annex if they met some minimum prerequisites. Larson said he reached out to the developer of the Monument Ridge parcels that are south of County Line Road on either side of I-25. He noted that this area is a beautiful point of entry to El Paso County, and Monument Ridge East is near his backyard.

The developer's plan showed a high-density, "worst case" scenario, he said, with a lack of definition regarding trees, trails, wildlife, and impact on nearby property values. There was a lot of community input during the Monument Planning Commission meeting, and the commission voted to recommend the annexation but stipulated that it would be zoned for 2.5-acre

lots.

The Monument Ridge West parcel has many of the same issues, planning for high density, with the county paving and expanding Beacon Lite Road and lanes to enter and exit on County Line Road. This parcel also had a significant issue with insufficient available water to support the desired density. At the recent Monument Town Council meeting, after two hours of public comment, the council voted no with a 5-2 vote. Larson expressed disappointment that the town and developer could not reach a compromise. The next step, he said, was for the developer to take its plans to the county, who will be the governing body. He requested that the community remain active. Mayor Pro Tem Steve King, who was in attendance, noted that this area is not open space; it is undeveloped land. The developer has some rights, he explained, noting that the town would like to annex the property under its guidelines. The Monument Town Council would like to bring it in under Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning, respecting the land and preserving the trees. Voting no is not the end, he said, and the town is actively working on the next steps.

For more on the Monument Ridge annexation, see the article on the Monument Town Council meeting on page 1 and the Monument Planning Commission meeting on page 4.

Renewable water projects

Secretary Roy Martinez, who is also a board member at Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) with an extensive background in water, noted that water is a big topic with many challenges, such as supply, availability, draining reservoirs, lowering aquifers, water quality, and contaminants of concern such as pharmaceuticals and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) or "forever chemicals." Aging infrastructure and workforce are a concern, as well as indirect and direct potable reuse (IPR and DPR). He said that many don't realize that water is a high-tech industry but also needs accountants and MBAs. When you turn on the tap, he said, good quality water is always there due to the fabulous job done by local agencies. He referenced a document he had sent around by the American Water Works Association, called the State of the Water Industry report, which listed top issues as aging infrastructure, long-term water supply, the public value of water re-

sources, water source protection, and aging workforce.

Martinez introduced Jim McGrady, who has worked as a district manager for 22 years and is the current general manager of Triview Metropolitan District (TMD). McGrady, who has been with TMD for six years, has advanced the ball down the field quite a way for renewable water, Martinez said, noting that the pipeline installation on Roller Coaster Road for the Northern Delivery System (NDS) is about 50% done.

TMD provides water, wastewater, stormwater, park and open space management, and road service on the east side of Monument. TMD serves 2,697 single-family equivalents, which include 78 commercial properties and 53 irrigation customers. TMD is located entirely within the Arkansas River Basin, and its current water supply is 100% Denver Basin groundwater (DBG). Given the concerns with depleting aquifers, TMD felt that if it could get renewable water in place, it could help preserve the DBG. Toward that end, TMD has acquired various renewable water rights and contracts as well as storage space to manage the variability and to recapture reusable return flows.

TMD has focused on partnerships to allow it to avoid construction, such as making use of the Southern Delivery System (SDS) infrastructure and contracting with Colorado Springs Utilities to convey, treat, and deliver water. TMD will use a reclaimed gravel pit for water storage in what is now called the Stonewall Springs South Reservoir complex. The NDS, which is expected to deliver water to TMD by 2024, is being funded through tap fees and renewable water fees.

For more information on TMD, see <http://triviewmetro.com>. For more information on the NDS project, see <https://triviewnds.org>.

Martinez then introduced Jessie Shaffer, district manager for WWSD, who is a Colorado native who graduated with a bachelor's in engineering from the Colorado School of Mines and a master's in business administration from Colorado Christian University. Shaffer has 21 years of experience as a design professional focusing exclusively on water and wastewater. He has been the district manager of WWSD for 15 years and is currently focused on redundancy, resiliency, and sustainability. Shaffer also serves as the president of the board for the El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority (EPCRLWA).

Shaffer said that the Town of Monument, Donala Water and Sanitation District (DWSD), Cherokee Metropolitan District (CMD), and WWSD have come together over the past two years to form a new water authority through an intergovernmental agreement. The goal is to pool and share resources and leverage all their assets to build infrastructure that would allow water, including treated effluent, that is flowing south in Monument and Fountain Creeks to be stored at Calhan Reservoir at Woodmoor Ranch and then pumped back north to be used by customers of the participating districts.

The concept is not new, Shaffer said, with studies having been done as far back as 2011 when WWSD purchased what was then called JV Ranch, which came with very senior water rights and a reservoir. One of the studies looked at options on how to capture reusable water, some of which is reusable to extinction. He noted that half of the water delivered to customers is irrigated outdoors and evaporates while the other half gets captured in the wastewater treatment system. He noted that many water districts have or will soon have plans for IPR and/or DPR. The game plan is to construct a treatment plant by the reservoir for water diverted by the Chilcott Ditch and pump it up north via a pipeline owned by CMD, along with some additional construction of pipeline into the northern part of the Loop area. One possible future option would be to use the Upper Black Squirrel Designated Groundwater Basin, a shallow aquifer for non-evaporative storage.

By pooling resources, the Loop could achieve economies of scale, lowering costs and increasing efficiency, redundancies, and resilience. The Loop can capture most of its participating entities' return flows and Fountain Creek water supplies. The Loop would enable regional well field management and storage with opportunities to reduce evaporation and streamflow losses by piping the Chilcott Ditch and covering the Calhan reservoir in the future, Shaffer said. In 2022, the authority was formed via an IGA and was awarded \$4 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) fund grant dollars to evaluate and move forward with the project.

In 2023, EPCRLWA has been refining the cost-sharing and business models, will study the operations and

NEPCO (Cont. on 20)



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maintenance costs, and begin the schematic design to improve cost estimate accuracy. Shaffer expects the authority to develop and implement a public relations plan once it knows the costs and to begin engineering design by Q1 2024. From 2024 to 2025, the authority would complete the engineering design and develop and execute the financing strategy. From 2025 to 2026, he expects construction to begin. Shaffer noted that Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) had its own reuse study but that EPCRLWA had calculated that while initial construction costs would be lower, the associated annual fees mean that after nine years, the Loop would be cheaper for customers in the long run.

Shaffer answered a question about the purity of treated wastewater delivered to homes by saying that there are a number of treatment options used, that

every stream nationwide has treated wastewater going into it and that he was very confident that it would make customers' water very pure. He said that he could not say that it would taste the same as water from the Denver Basin; noting that WWSD is already delivering surface water in parts of the year from Lake Woodmoor, which has a different taste than groundwater.

Martinez then hosted the panel, taking questions from the audience. McGrady answered a question, saying that the NDS has no plans at this time to provide service to neighborhoods on individual wells. A resident asked why medians were being watered in Northgate, and Shaffer noted that heavy-handed conservation conflicts with land use and that WWSD is not a land use organization but does have mandatory conservation restrictions every year. King noted that the Town of

Monument is looking at the issue and expects to develop more restrictive water conservation moving forward.

Residents noted that the Loop and NDS sounded similar and wondered why they did not join forces. McGrady answered that NDS had originally expected to have five to six participants but that, reviewing CSU's permits for SDS, they found an "over the divide issue" where SDS was not allowed to serve water out of Division 2 in the Arkansas watershed into Division 1 in the South Platte watershed (see <https://waterknowledge.colostate.edu/water-management-administration/water-rights/administration-of-water-rights/>.) That precluded some of the WWSD service area which extends into Division 1. Shaffer said it would be problematic to re-open the SDS permit. King added that one of the concerns with the Monument Ridge West an-

nexation was that it would preclude the town from using the NDS.

For more information on WWSD, see <https://woodmoorwater.org>; for more information on EPCLRWA, see <https://www.loopauthority.org>.

Presentations and resources from the NEPCO meeting can be found in the member area of the NEPCO website. Contact your HOA for information on how to access the member area.

NEPCO meetings are usually held on the second Saturday of every other month at the Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr., 10 a.m. to noon. The next meeting is Sept. 9 with the topic of Town of Monument Land Use Planning. All members of HOAs are welcome. For more information, see <https://nepco.org>.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackie.burhans@ocn.me.

Woodmoor Improvement Association, July 5 and 26

Board questioned by residents, hears input on common areas

By Jackie Burhans

At its July 5 meeting, the Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) board president, Brian Bush apologized for rescheduling its June meeting, explaining that there had not been enough board members to form a quorum. In addition to directors' reports, the board addressed a resident's concern about its operations. At its July 26 meeting, the board heard input from residents of the South Woodmoor Preserve.

Resident questions board operations

South Woodmoor resident Jennifer Davis expressed her concerns that the board's executive sessions are not being held in accordance with the law. The public board meeting, generally held on the fourth Wednesday of each month, is usually preceded by an executive session that is not open to the public. Davis handed the board a copy of the Colorado Common Interest Ownership Act (CCIOA, pronounced "Kiowa"), referring to section 308 regarding executive sessions. Davis asserted that the board must open its

public meeting first and then go into executive session and that the minutes are supposed to indicate the purpose of the board meeting. She further noted that CCIOA limits the purpose of executive sessions to six specific reasons.

Davis also noted that there had been some concerns raised on the NextDoor platform, indicating people felt disconnected. She said the board's agenda was not posted and recommended it do so on its website. Her own concerns revolved around issues with WOSC LLC, and she asserted that it was possible that, in a court of law, a judge could deem the board's actions null and void if they were not conducting their meetings in accordance with the law. WOSC LLC was formed to purchase open space in south Woodmoor and donate it to WIA.

Board President Brian Bush noted that the association is not governed by CCIOA but that her concerns were valid and that the board would discuss them. CCIOA, which is part of the Colorado Revised Statutes (CRS 38-33.3-101 to -401), is a set of laws that govern the

formation, management, powers, and operation of common interest communities, also known as homeowners associations (HOAs). According to the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies website, some provisions apply only to communities created after July 1, 1992, while others are limited based on the annual assessment and size of the planned community. WIA was established in 1971 and has an annual assessment of under \$300. For more information, see <https://dre.colorado.gov/ccioa-and-other-state-local-and-federal-laws>.

HOA Administrator Denise Cagliaro noted that the board agendas are posted on the website at <https://woodmoor.org/meeting-agendas/>

Resident input on common area improvements

At its July 26 meeting, the board invited community members to provide input on common area improvements, focusing primarily on the South Woodmoor Preserve that the board had accepted in June 2022 from WOSC LLC. See article at <https://www.ocn.me/v22n7.htm#wia>. About 25 people attended the meeting.

Bush noted that the board constantly tries to improve the common areas but thought it would be good to solicit input from the community to consider as it develops budgets and makes maintenance and management plans. He noted that, as part of the acceptance, WIA had agreed with WOSC LLC on specific improvements it would make at the preserve. He also said the board is committed to treating the preserve like its other open spaces. He also reminded attendees that, as a nonprofit entity, WIA cannot prevent members of the public from accessing its open spaces.

The following input was given regarding the South Woodmoor Preserve:

- The ability of first responders to locate people on its unnamed trails.
- Opposition to dog waste stations, questions about the cost, and input on locations.
- Approval of the new trail base and concern about its width.
- Reconsideration of a fence to keep others' dogs out of a private yard.
- Concern about the possible addition of parking around the South Woodmoor Preserve
- Concerns about prairie dogs, the raptor poles previously installed, and a request for collaboration with WIA.
- Concern over loose dogs on the trail and a request for signs reminding users of state leash laws.
- The procedure for requesting access over the trails to deliver landscape rocks.
- Whether WOSC LLC could change the agreement that was made, removing some of its provisions.

Bush thanked the residents for their input, which the board would consider, he said. In responding to specific input, Safety Director Brad Gleason said a cell phone would help responders home in to within three to five meters of a call. Bush said previous surveys indicated residents want waste stations, of which 10 are already installed in other open spaces; they cost \$250 to install and are maintained by a contractor for \$70 per month. Common Areas Administrator Bob Pearsall said the width of the trail and the denial of the fence were related to the need for easement access by both WIA and Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District. Bush suggested the resident work with Pearsall to recon-

sider the fencing.

Noting the cost of installation and maintenance, Bush said the board has no plans to install parking at this time. He said the board was in "wait and see" mode on both parking and prairie dog concerns, given the extremely active construction in the area. The raptor poles previously installed were to encourage natural mitigation of prairie dogs and avoid the need for pesticides. Some of the poles have blown down due to high winds and will be removed, and the board will determine later whether to install more sturdy poles or what other actions to take. For the resident working with a wildlife company to control prairie dogs on their property, Bush directed them to work with Steve Cutler, director of common areas, on any possible collaboration on the nearby common area space.

Gleason suggested residents call Woodmoor Public Safety (WPS) or the Pikes Peak Humane Society (PPHS) animal enforcement division and take photos or videos to help identify people with loose dogs. WPS can only cite residents, he said, while PPHS has additional resources. Bush said an email could be sent out on leash laws but noted that WIA has email addresses for only about half of its residents. He also noted that none of the open spaces has extensive signs. Bush suggested that the resident who wanted to access their yard over the trail work with WIA staff.

Finally, on the matter of WOSC LLC changing its requirements, Bush noted that the commitment was recorded by the clerk and recorder and was legally binding. Tish Norman, former president of WOSC LLC, noted that it had worked with WIA and reached a compromise agreement that would not please everyone. She also noted that as of June 1, WOSC LLC had been disbanded, and she would send out her last update the following weekend.

Other concerns unrelated to the South Woodmoor Preserve included the possibility of a trail on the median in the middle of Fairplay Drive, guidelines for donations to WPS for vacation checks, and questions about the mowing of open spaces. Bush noted that the county was responsible for Fairplay Drive itself and wouldn't let WIA create a trail due to the cost of installing needed crosswalks. He suggested that residents contact the county. WPS Chief Kevin Nielsen said donations were voluntary, so no guidelines were available, but any contribution would be gratefully received. Pearsall noted that open spaces are mowed twice a year, and those that were accessible had been mowed recently and would be mowed again in October. He said the increased rainfall has caused the grass to grow exponentially; Bush asked that residents mow tall grass on their property so it would not dry up and become a fire hazard.

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Water Authority (EPCRLWA). For more on NEPCO, see the article on page 18.

- The board unanimously approved spending \$1,150 to replace batteries for WPS’ Motorola radios.
- Nielsen reported that WPS will no longer provide traffic control for Lewis-Palmer Middle School and Palmer Ridge High School due to risk and

liability issues. He asked that residents drive carefully and watch for kids as school starts back up.

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 Aug. 23.

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.

July Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

It was back to normal in July after a couple months of record cold and wet conditions. Temperatures averaged right at normal for the month with a mix of below and above normal conditions. Precipitation was slightly below average, but we are well above normal for the year overall.

The first week of the month was a continuation of June, with below normal temperatures and wet conditions. Temperatures were below normal every day from the 1st through the 8th, with the coldest day occurring on the 5th when high temperatures didn’t reach 600F.

A warmer and relatively dry period then took hold for the next week, with highs getting back to normal from the 9th through the 16th. Highs reached the upper 70s to upper 80s each afternoon, with most days just seeing afternoon clouds build up. But a lack of moisture in the region meant thunderstorms were not common as storms produced rainfall only on the 10th and the 15th.

The pattern finally began to shift to more monsoon-like conditions during the third week of the month as high pressure built in over the region from

the southwest. This meant both an active pattern with daily thunderstorms each afternoon and evening and warmer temperatures before the storms formed. Temperatures were consistently in the mid-80s to low 90s from the 16th through the end of the month. Our hottest period occurred from the 24th through the 26th, with highs topping out at 93 on the 25th. This is right on cue for the warmest temperature of the month, with the third week of July representing the time of the year when temperatures are warmest on average overall.

Rainfall from the daily rounds of thunderstorms was hit and miss, with some areas receiving nearly an inch in an hour while just a few miles away only a few tenths of inch accumulated. The month ended with a bang, as several rounds of thunderstorms and heavy rainfall developed during the evening of the 31st, producing 1-2 inches of rainfall for most locations.

A look ahead

August is the last true “summer” month for the region. We are often greeted with sunny, pleasant mornings that turn into afternoon and early evening thunderstorms. Highs during the month range from the mid-

80s at the beginning of the month to mid-70s at the end. Temperatures at night get more comfortable as well, often dipping into the 40s.

July 2023 Weather Statistics

Average High	81.5° (-1.0°)
100-year return frequency value max	87.6° min 75.3°
Average Low	52.2° (+1.2°)
100-year return frequency value max	56.2° min 46.9°
Highest Temperature	93°F on the 25th
Lowest Temperature	42°F on the 1st
Monthly Precipitation	3.15”
	(-0.22” 6% below normal)
100-year return frequency value max	6.03” min 0.98”
Monthly Snowfall	0.0”
Season to Date Snow	0.0”
	(the snow season is from July 1 to June 30)
Season to Date Precip	20.21”
	(+4.53” 40% above normal)
	(the precipitation now season is from Jan 1 to Dec 31)
Heating Degree Days	33 (+22)
Cooling Degree Days	91 (+1)

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 25.

Disclaimer: The information and opinions expressed in LetterstoOurCommunityaretheresponsibilityoftheletter writers and should not be interpreted as the views of OCN even if the letter writer is an OCN volunteer. The letters are arranged in alphabetical order based on the last name of the author.

Thank you, School District 38

On behalf of the Monument Hill Kiwanis Club, I want to thank Lewis-Palmer School District 38 for the contribution of time and efforts to help make the Monument Hill Kiwanis 2023 Fourth of July Parade a huge success. Specifically, I would like to thank D38 Transportation Supervisor Julie Abeyta and district drivers David McDaniel, Tom Rainy, Guadalupe Leonard, David Schindel, Michael Schad, David Bane, Tom Bliss, Winston Brower, Michael Drew, Esther Aniesta, Eric Sullivan, and Hope Lowe for safely and patiently using school buses to shuttle parade-goers from the

Lewis-Palmer High School (LPHS) parking lot to and from the parade. Ricky Vestal, Maintenance and Grounds supervisor, and his crew did an excellent job mowing and preparing the parade lineup areas for over 90 events.

Mary Anderson, custodian at Grace Best Elementary, graciously provided her time to open the school to access all the Monument Hill Kiwanis parade signs and equipment before and after the parade. The district also allowed use of the water tap at the bus barn, so the Renaissance Festival folks and animals had water both before and after the parade. Finally, Bridgette O’Connor, principal, and Nick Baker, athletic director, granted Kiwanis the use of the LPHS parking lot for parade-goers to park vehicles, to ride the shuttles to the parade, and to return to their cars on a shuttle back to the high school. It takes many community members to facilitate the success of this parade, and District 38 was certainly a big contributor. Thank you District 38.

Ted Bauman
Monument Hill Kiwanis Club
Parade Line-up Chair

Kudos to Monument board and management for Artsites 2023

Since 2003, the not-for-profit group Tri-Lakes Views has brought the arts to Monument. With the cooperation of the town and the Lewis-Palmer School District board, that became an annual rotating display of sculpture along with a permanent collection of public art. That relationship is again being exhibited on the multiple pedestals throughout our community. I encourage you to take the time to enjoy the pieces along with our wonderful installations at the entrances on Baptist Road (Aspen Grove) and Second Street (Ice Harvest).

Dr. Elizabeth Konarski

Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

All-time great children’s reads

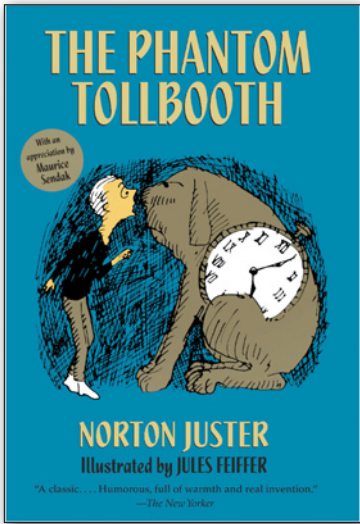
By the staff at Covered Treasures

“There is more treasure in books than in all the pirate’s loot on Treasure Island.”—Walt Disney

These award-winning books are full of treasure, have stood the test of time, and are still some of the best to foster the love of reading in a child.

The Phantom Tollbooth
By Norton Juster
(Yearling) \$8.99

For Milo, everything’s a bore. When a tollbooth mysteriously appears in his room, he drives through only because he’s got nothing better to do. But on the other side, things seem different. Milo visits the Island of Conclusions (you get there by jumping), learns about time from a ticking watchdog named Tock, and even embarks on a quest to rescue Rhyme and Reason. Along the way, Milo realizes life is far from dull. In fact, it’s exciting beyond his wildest dreams!



Julie of the Wolves
By Joan Craighead George (HarperCollins) \$7.99

To her village, she is known as Miyax; to her friend in San Francisco, she is Julie. When her life in the village becomes dangerous, Miyax runs away only to find herself lost in the Alaskan wilderness. Miyax survives

by copying the ways of a pack of wolves and soon grows to love her new wolf family. The first in a trilogy, this edition features original illustrations, an introduction by the author’s children, her Newbery acceptance speech, selections from her field notebooks, discussion guide, and further reading guide.

Old Yeller
By Fred Gipson (HarperCollins) \$9.99

When his father sets out on a cattle drive, 14-year-old Travis is left to take care of his family and their farm. Living in frontier Texas Hill Country during the 1860s, Travis comes to face new and often perilous responsibilities. A particular nuisance is a stray yellow dog that shows up and steals food from the family. But the big canine who Travis calls “Old Yeller” proves his worth by defending the family from danger. And Travis ultimately finds help and comfort in the courage and unwavering love of the dog who comes to be his very best friend.

Rascal
By Sterling North (Puffin) \$8.99

Nothing’s surprising in the North household, not even Sterling’s new pet raccoon. Rascal is a baby when Sterling brings him home, but soon the two are best friends, doing everything together—until the spring day when everything suddenly changes. This special anniversary edition includes classic illustrations restored to their original splendor, a letter from the author’s daughter, and material from the illustrator’s personal collection.

Anne of Green Gables
By L.M. Montgomery (Puffin) \$8.99

The Cuthberts are in for a shock. They are expecting an orphan boy to help with the work at Green Gables, but a skinny red-haired girl turns up instead. Highly spirited Anne Shirley charms her way into the Cuth-

berts’ affection with her vivid imagination and constant chatter, and soon it’s impossible to imagine life without her.

In the Heart of the Rockies
By G.A. Henty (Dover) \$11.95

Determined to improve his struggling family’s financial situation, 16-year-old Tom Wade leaves England in 1860 and sets out for the untamed wilderness of the American West. Arriving in the small western outpost of Denver to mine for gold, he soon encounters Native American warriors, takes part in big-game hunts, and learns how to survive a mountain winter with nothing but resourcefulness and perseverance. Young readers get valuable, exciting lessons in history from the “Prince of Storytellers,” George Henty, in a grand adventure classic that weaves together the story of a teenage fictional hero and real-life episodes of exploration.

The Castle in the Attic
By Elizabeth Winthrop (Yearling), \$7.99

William is devastated to learn that his favorite caretaker, Mrs. Phillips, is leaving. But then she gives him her parting gift—a mysterious model castle that has been in her family for years. The castle is perfect in every way, with a drawbridge, a moat, and a finger-high knight to guard the gates. It’s almost too real. Sure enough, when William picks up the tiny silver knight, Sir Simon comes alive in his hand and tells William a mighty story of wild sorcery, wizards, and a kingdom in need of saving. William embarks on a fantastic quest to another land and another time.

Until next month, happy reading.

The staff at Covered Treasures can be reached at books@ocn.me.

August Library Events

Summer Adventure ends, All Pikes Peak Reads announced

By Harriet Halbig

The library district’s Summer Adventure program ended on July 31 with a tremendous number of participants. Thank you for joining us.

The Monument Library will sponsor three family-friendly concerts in Limbach Park on Aug. 11, 18, and 25 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. The park is located at 151 Front St. in Monument. Remember to bring a lawn chair or

blanket! For information on the performers, please see the district website, ppld.org, and look under programs by location.

The title for this year’s All Pikes Peak Reads program has been announced. It is The Girls Who Stepped Out of Line: Untold Stories of the Women Who Changed the Course of WWII by Maj. Gen. Mari Eder. The author will visit Library 21c at 3 p.m. on Oct. 7 when she will

give a presentation, answer questions, and offer copies of her book for sale.

Please note that all Pikes Peak Library District facilities will be closed on Monday, Sept. 4 in observance of Labor Day.

Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me

Palmer Lake Historical Society

Take a walk through history

By Marlene Brown

In lieu of the regular meeting in July, the Palmer Lake Historical Society (PLHS) took a walk through historical Monument. Led by Jim Sawatzki, past president of PLHS and filmmaker and owner of Palmer Divide Productions. His research is rich, showing that Monument is still standing strong. Many of the little houses you see in town were built in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Pioneers began settling in the Monument area, and there were business owners, cowboys, and ranchers living in and near the town. There were two hotels near the Rio Grande Railroad train station.

Incorporated in 1879, the town was first called Henry's Station, after Henry "Dutch" Limbach, Monument's first town mayor. The train station and hotels were near where Limbach Park is today. The town's name was later changed to Monument, after the rock formation to the west located in Monument Preserve, near Mount Herman.

Monument Lake was one of the first "ice harvest" towns, because it was on the railroad line. They sent ice blocks by train to the East that were used for cold storage of the meat from the cattle that had been raised in the West. The lake is now stocked with fish yearly and used for recreational fishing and boating.

Members of PLHS walked along the streets of Monument looking at the homes that were built by the pioneers. The Higby General Store was located

where Covered Treasures Bookstore is now at Washington and Second Streets. "Big Red," a Lewis-Palmer School District 38 building, was built in the 1920s. It had all 12 grades in the same building attended by children from the town to the outlying ranchlands.

Walking with Sawatzki around Monument, you learn that many other buildings you see every day are originals, such as The Bistro on Second Street, which was the original post office. Though there have been additions to the building, the original structure is still under the walls of the restaurant.

Take the time someday to walk around the streets and imagine the life of the pioneers who lived there.

The historical walk on July 15 in Greenland Open Space was called off due to weather conditions. The August meeting has been canceled. Board members will be volunteering and conducting tours at the Reynolds Ranch Homestead House at the Western Museum of Mining and Industry Aug. 12 from 10 a.m.-3 pm for Family Day (wwmi.org) and will be open to the public. PLHS normally meets the third Thursday of every month at 7 p.m. at the Palmer Lake Town Hall.

The mission of the PLHS is to preserve, protect, promote, and provide access to historical data, artifacts, and other items of significance relating to the Palmer Divide area and make resources available to



Above: Jim Sawatzki, past president of Palmer Lake Historical Society, leads a historical walk through Monument on a sunny Sunday morning. Photo by Steve Pate.

the public primarily through the Lucretia Vaile Museum and annual programming. For more information about membership and volunteer opportunities, go to palmerdividehistory.org

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

High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

Will Vogl: father, firefighter, and farmer

By Janet Sellers

"The nation that destroys its soil destroys itself."—Franklin D. Roosevelt (U.S. president 1933-45) in a letter to state governors in 1937.

I recently visited Will Vogl's Black Forest farm where he shared his "living soil" restoration projects: hugelkultur (moist mound culture farming) and pastureland reclamation using age-old farming methods. The rich, moisture-filled soil thrives with or without rain or irrigation.

Vogl explained, "It depends on the source, but a 1% increase in soil organic matter (SOM) in the top 12 inches of soil will increase the soil's natural water storage capacity by 20 to 30,000 gallons per acre. Here on our land, we have increased our SOM by around 2% in places of our pasture we have treated with compost, essentially allowing our land to hold an additional 50,000 gallons of water per acre over what it could before.

Vogl shared some of his information resources with me such as the USDA Forest Service as well as the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service information at this link: www.nrcs.usda.gov/.

We know from history that our own country had famine and other disasters when we didn't steward our land as nature intended. As far back as 1937, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt wrote a letter urging state governors to implement soil conservation laws in reference to the horrific drought that caused the dust bowl and famine. There are ways to tend the land using natural nutrients and moisture abilities for what the soil—our Earth's skin—needs to be resilient.

In his writings on the imperative for regenerative agriculture, Dr. Christopher J. Rhodes at Resilience.org explains how we got these erroneous notions. Throughout history, civilizations have thrived or declined based on the quality of their soils—a crucial factor for us to feed ourselves and our animals.

Manmade ecological disaster

The English gentleman farmer Jethro Tull (1674-1741) conceived and promoted his erroneous belief that land must be heavily plowed to control weeds. Extended use of such aggressive and poor farming strategies overtaxed unprotected U.S. farmlands and weakened the soil. This, and a decade of drought,



Above: Bill Vogl gave a walk-and-talk on his land to citizens interested in his family's land conservation efforts in July. Upcoming fall farm walks and volunteer days are in the works, too. Here, Vogl shows the age-old hugelkultur system creating a thriving food and pollinator/flower garden above ground, made by stacking cast-off fire mitigation tree trunks, branches, compost, and soil and covering with pine mulch that he says "holds in moisture like a giant sponge." Hugelkultur can also be used for flat landscapes or garden areas by using a pit for the materials and covering that with soil and mulch, maintaining needed moisture and nutrients for plants to thrive. Vogl's sheep pasture is in the distance, where he practices soil conservation with pasture rotational methods. Grazing animals play an important role in maintaining the ecosystem by stimulating plant growth. This triggers biological activity and nutrient exchanges and mimics the migration of the tens of thousands of elk, deer, and bison that had always kept the prairie ecosystem in balance. Photos by Janet Sellers.

created massive dust storms in places like the prairie region in the 1930s. "Suitcase farmers" of the 1910s and 1920s land boom had torn up the region's native sod for quick profits, then abandoned it. Thousands of years of native grass evolution were destroyed, and the ground was naked and exposed.

President Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps of 1933-42 enrolled more than 3 million men and planted 3 billion trees to protect 21 million acres from soil erosion, aiding in the establishment of eight

hundred state parks.

Even the ancient Greeks believed plants got all their nutrients from the soil. Many centuries later, erroneous beliefs based on mere logic and not on land experience have caused civilizations to destroy themselves via their soil practices.

Janet Sellers is an avid "lazy gardener," letting Mother Nature lead the way for pleasant natural landscapes. Reach her at JanetSellers@ocn.me.

Art Matters

Fine art and the making of worlds

By Janet Sellers

"Sciencediscover,designinvents.Where scienceworksto uncover an objective world, design brings forth multiple worlds simultaneously..."—Andrea Mignolo, The Design of Things.

I recently attended an artists' roundtable discussion with the brilliant James Bradburne, general director of Milan, Italy's Pinacoteca di Brera. He brought up many points about art, saying he believes "museums are a verb and not a destination." He enthusiastically encouraged us artists to "keep on making art. Our world needs you now more than ever." He emphasized that courageous, creative thinkers are needed now to invent, speak out, and bring to others important, creative thinking by manifesting ideas into reality.

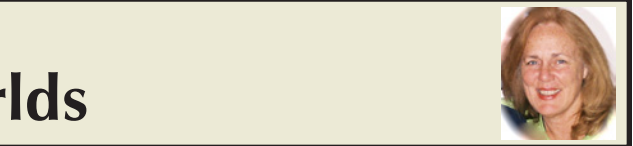
When we discover how handmade fine art ignites the fires of imagination within ourselves, it's a profound and transformative experience. Engaging with art can unlock a wellspring of creative potential, leading us to express ourselves in unique and inventive ways. Besides such important cultural support for us to thrive in our communities, our business world depends on innovation to flourish.

Handmade fine art is especially evocative because it shows a human touch, allowing people to connect with their innermost feelings. This emotional resonance can lead to a deeper understanding of oneself and others, fostering empathy and compassion. Studies show that when art is available in hospitals, care centers, therapeutic practices and public

places, it supports healing, improves memory, and stimulates interest in hope for improvement. It's fun to look and ponder for oneself the meaning we personally find as well as what the artist might have had in mind. This sense of wonder can extend beyond art and permeate various aspects of our lives.

Taking in our local fine art can inspire our sense of wonder and awe. Reminding us to appreciate creative beauty right where we live, Tri-Lakes has self-guided sculpture tour maps and a monthly Art Hop to get us out into our community generating pleasant connections. These affirm our sense of place. Upcoming, our art-filled local Hummingbird Festival is Aug. 4 and 5 at Happy Landing Ranch (Rollercoaster Road just north of Hodgen). Our next Art Hop is Aug. 17 in downtown Monument—see you there!

Janet Sellers is an artist, writer, and speaker, sharing her works locally and across the country. Contact her at JanetSellers@ocn.me.



Right: July Art Hop in Monument. On July 20, Jefferson Studios showcased Abbey Hutcheon (top photo - back to the camera) and Daryl Muncey (middle photo - center of frame). At El Santo Vaquero (bottom photo), Christian Kurz chats with guests after the Spiritual Archetypes class, one of their many free classes and events for the community. Photos by Janet Sellers.

Snapshots of Our Community

Neighborhood Watch, Jun. 29



Left: Brent Ambuehl, coordinator of Crime Prevention for the El Paso County Sheriff's Office, presented an informal report to about 45 people on how to protect against

various types of criminal activity at a Neighborhood Watch event on June 29 at Wesley Owens Coffee & Café. Actions by residents can reduce risk of home and vehicle break-ins, including signage indicating your home is protected with a security system and/or cameras, exterior lighting, locking all doors including the entrance from your attached garage to the house, not leaving garage door openers on the visor of your vehicle parked outdoors, etc. We've all heard the admonition to lock your vehicle and don't leave valuables visible from outside your vehicle. Ambuehl once conducted a test at a local trailhead and found 14 cars unlocked. For useful information, see www.EPCSheriffsOffice.com, including how to file non-emergency crime reports online. *Photo by Steve Pate.*

Stallsmith's 100th, July 1

Right: About three dozen friends and relatives helped Palmer Lake resident Joseph Stallsmith celebrate his 100th birthday on July 1. Stallsmith told *Our Community News*, "There's not too many around here" who have

reached that milestone, "so, I guess it's a big deal. I never thought when I was going to school that I'd make 100." Stallsmith says he feels "all right." Asked if he had any advice on how to live to 100, Stallsmith said, "Stay out of trouble." Did he follow his own advice? "Not always," he admitted, smiling. This has been a big year for Stallsmith. In addition to turning 100, the Palmer Lake Sanitation District dedicated its building to him in March. Stallsmith created the district 45 years ago. He also helped set up the sanitation system at the U.S. Air Force Academy. *Photo by Michael Weinfeld.*



July 4th Festivities Photos by David Futey

Palmer Lake Fun Run

Right: The 41st Palmer Lake Fun Run started off the Fourth of July festivities in the Tri-Lakes area. Race Director Kelsey Belsher said over 800 in-person and virtual runners from across the country participated in this year's race. Belsher said the race is "100% volunteer led and organized" and she "thanks the community for having the race as an integral part of the Fourth events." Belsher added, "All of the proceeds go to the Palmer Lake Elementary School (PLES) PTO who uses the funds to enrich the PLES student environment in the classroom, through field trips and teacher grants." Andrew Bel (20:32) and Aubrey Surage (23:42), both from Colorado Springs, were the top male and female finishers. **Pictured:** Colorado Springs resident Susan Cassell, left, and Cinnamon Lepore of Monument.



Pancake Breakfast



Left: Knights of Columbus Council 11514 of St. Peter Church hosted its annual Fourth of July Pancake Breakfast. Grand Knight Alan Feldkamp coordinated the event with volunteer assistance from council members, Boy Scout Troop 17, students from St. Peter, and Monument Hill Kiwanis members. Feldkamp said, "We really enjoy doing this every year. We started serving at 6:30 a.m. to first responders and others and expect over 1,500 to take part including finishers of the Fun Run." The breakfast choices were pancakes, eggs, two types of sausage, coffee, and orange juice. This is the Knights' largest fundraiser of the year. Feldkamp said the Knights "donate to over 60 organizations including Eagle Scout Colin Sager's P-51 monument project."

Parade



Grayson Merriam, left, and Cameron Stathan have their bikes adorned with festive Fourth of July decorations as they await the start of the Monument Hill Kiwanis Children's Parade.



Mitch LaKind, Monument mayor.



Glant Havenar, Palmer Lake mayor.



WWII Navy veteran Jim Swanson



WWII Army veteran Ed Beck



OCN volunteer and Colorado Front Range Unicyclist Audrey Burkart jumps rope while unicycling.



Greg Bielanski, Kiwanis president.



Makena Norton of Monument, Pikes Peak or Bust Rodeo Girl of the West.



Tri-Lakes Chamber Street Fair



Left: The Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce Street Fair in Monument was filled with post-parade spectators after the Monument Hill Kiwanis Main Parade on the Fourth of July. The spectators enjoyed a variety of food options and visited vendor booths. **Right:** John Howe and Karrie Pittman staffed the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce booth *Photos by David Futey.*

Pier ribbon cutting, July 24



Above: Members of Monument’s Parks, Water, and Streets Departments, along with the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce, watched Mayor Mitch LaKind cut the ribbon for the new pier at Monument Lake on July 24. It took three weeks to build the 375-foot pier. The project cost nearly \$239,000. A Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission grant covered more than \$171,000 of the price. The pier in the northeast corner of the lake has been very popular since opening on June 14. It gives anglers and pedestrians access to a part of the shoreline that previously had been inaccessible. This pier is in addition to the old, shorter pier at the southeast corner of the lake. *Photo by Michael Weinfeld.*

Patillo at TLCA, July 7



Left: Singer, songwriter, evangelist, and philanthropist Leon Patillo brought his uplifting one-man show to the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA) on July 7. Patillo’s music career started in the 1960s performing with the funk group *Creation* and with *Funkadelic* and *Martha and the Vandellas*. In the mid-1970s, he joined *Santana* and performed on two of their albums, *Borboletta* and *Festival*. After two years with *Santana*, he turned to a solo career of contemporary Christian music. On this evening Patillo performed *Proud to be an American* along with his own songs, including *Flesh of my Flesh*, which is often played at weddings, and *J.E.S.U.S.* Between songs, Patillo shared life stories and philosophies such as “life is built on relationships” and his efforts toward helping children through his SING Foundation and Rise Above Bullying. *Photo by David Futey.*

Water tank nears completion



Above: On July 25, workers were wire wrapping and shooting layers of specialized concrete body coating on the Town of Monument water storage tank project. Wire wrap reinforces the installed concrete tank dome and side wall panels yet allows flexibility for fluctuating water levels inside the 2-million-gallon capacity tank once it is in service. Dismantlement of framing and decking, as well as piping, cleaning, and disinfecting of the interior will follow. Exterior painting will be the last step to complete the tank structure. Excavation began in spring 2022 in Forest View Estates west of Monument. A Colorado Supreme Court opinion says the town’s declaration of eminent domain, overriding the established Forest View Estates residential-only restricted covenants, does not require the town to compensate adjacent property owners for lowered property values based on the tank site appropriation. *Photo by Sharon Williams.*

Sunrise at Palmer Lake



Above: A fisherman casts his line and enjoys the serenity and sunrise at Palmer Lake on the Fourth of July. *Photo by David Futey.*

Eagle Scout seeks support

Right: Troop 17 Eagle Scout Colin Saber had a booth set up at the Fourth of July Pancake Breakfast to bring awareness to his Eagle Scout project. The project is to honor WWII Col. Earl Depner, a Monument resident who passed away in January 2022. He flew a P-51 Mustang. Saber said he really wants to honor all WWII U.S. pilots and fallen heroes for their sacrifice. The project is to move and install a 2,000 pound, 11-by-7 by 6-foot P-51 Mustang sculpture from Fort Collins to the Monument Town Hall. Saber needs to raise \$55,000 for the project and is seeking support from the community. Information on how to support his project is at p51monument.com. *Photo by David Futey.*



Cruisers holds fundraiser, July 22



Above: The Tri-Lakes Cruisers Hotrod Club sponsored a fundraiser for the Alzheimer’s Association at Jackson Creek Senior Living on July 22. Vintage hotrods and muscle cars were on display, including a ‘32 “deuce coupe,” a souped-up ‘55 Chevy, Andy Houck’s restored ‘55 Chevy “first series” pickup shown above, and many others. Jackson Creek Senior Living provided hot dogs, soft drinks, and cookies. *Photo by Steve Pate.*

TLWC visits Bear Creek Robotics



Left: Members of Tri-Lakes Women’s Club (TLWC) got to see the results of one of their grants on June 14. From left, Grant Chairperson Julie Shook and co-President Shelley Pruett watched students use the robotics building kits that were bought with the grant. Shook and Pruett were guests of Bear Creek Elementary School at its Summer Robotics Camp. The camp, open to all second- to sixth-grade District 38 students, focuses on robotics and engineering. Last fall, the school started a formal robotics program through the First Lego League Challenge, a research and robotics tournament for 9- to 16-year-olds. To participate in the program, the school needs to buy model robot kits over the next few years, and that is where the TLWC grant came in. *Photo by Anne Campbell.*

Cherry Creek Chipping Day, July 15

Right: On July 15, residents of Cherry Creek Crossing held their First Annual Chipping Day with the Monument Fire Department. They hope to do this again. From left are firefighters Greg Lovato and Morgan Cudney and residents Dave Lewis and Jeff Childers. *Photo by Mike Pipkins.*



Monument Farmers Market



Above and right: Where is everybody? They were at the Farmers Market in Monument on Saturday morning. The Farmers Market was in full bloom and brimming with vegetables, fruit, baked goods, soap, and other items in the parking lot at Big Red, 66 Jefferson St. The Farmers Market will be open every Saturday untill October, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. *Photos by Marlene Brown.*



MSD celebrates 50th



Above and below: A band, balloons, and hot dogs marked the 50th anniversary celebration of Monument Sanitation District (MSD) on July 29. Members celebrated the board working out of the MSD office on Second Street since 1973. Mark Parker, district manager, was there making sure that all who attended had everything they needed to enjoy their lunch. MSD collects wastewater from the residents and businesses west of I-25 in and out of the town limits of Monument. See <https://monumentsd.colorado.gov>. *Photos by Marlene Brown.*



Why advertise in OCN?

- OCN is mailed FREE to every resident and business in the Tri-Lakes area. We mail more than 22,000 copies every month and put another 700 copies in stacks throughout the area. OCN has the one of the largest mailed circulations among local newspapers in Colorado. We put copies of OCN into the hands of those people most likely to buy your products or services: local residents and businesses.
- OCN is a primary source for Tri-Lakes area news. Since its founding in 2001, OCN has been presenting unbiased, detailed coverage of Tri-Lakes area governmental entities and their deliberations and actions. Credibility is key. Advertising in a credible medium typically rubs off on the advertisers in that media.
- OCN gives preference to Tri-Lakes area businesses. As part of OCN's long-standing commitment to encouraging the economic health of the Tri-Lakes area, we offer a significantly discounted ad rate to Tri-Lakes area businesses as a way to help local businesses like yours succeed.
- OCN's low ad rates and monthly publication schedule help stretch your ad budget. OCN has one of the lowest ad costs per printed copy of any local publication. Since OCN is a monthly publication, your ad is out there for a month—more than four times longer than other local papers. Many of our advertisers tell us they're still getting calls in the third and fourth week of the month.
- OCN doesn't use contracts. You aren't tied down. Adjust your advertising month-to-month to meet your changing needs. Our advertisers run ads in OCN because they see benefit in it, not because they're bound by a contract they signed months before. To reward frequent advertisers, OCN has a Frequent Advertiser Bonus (FAB) rewards program. You earn up to 10% of your ad cost as a reward you can use to reduce the cost of future OCN advertising. The more you advertise with OCN, the more you save. Thanks to our FAB rewards program, OCN advertisers have saved more than \$108,000!
- You are supporting a good thing. Your advertising dollars support a unique all-volunteer, Tri-Lakes-focused effort to present factual, comprehensive news to all Tri-Lakes area residents and businesses.

And the best reason of all: It works!

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

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

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

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

Elba D'Asaro, Spa Medica - "OCN ads work!"

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

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

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 volunteers
Many students need volunteer hours for scouting, civics classes, or other clubs volunteering hours. Monument Community Garden as well as Friends of Fox Run Park will have some openings for student volunteers (and grownups, too) for the summer. Gardening tasks include preparing garden beds, weeding, sowing seeds, and developing the compost. Bring gardening gloves, some tools will be provided on the work days by other volunteers. Volunteers are needed weekly, in harvest time, twice a week. Friends of Fox Run Park also has

openings for volunteers for various tasks. Besides tasks, there will be a short information and skills demonstration for each 2-3 hour session. Contact Janet Sellers at janet-sellers@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
Because of an unprecedented amount of slash and mulch from recent tree die-off, mulch needs to be picked up and used in the community. The rain has kept people from being able to pick it up but it needs to be picked up as soon as possible. Slash drop

off through Sep. 10 (\$2/load). Free mulch pick up through 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., **Aug. 8**, 5 pm. Meet at the Mt. Herman trailhead off Mt. Herman Rd and Nursery Rd and bring gloves. Tools will be provided.

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 (findyourunclaimed-property.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 through Thursday, 10 am to 4 pm. For more information about Tri-Lakes Cares or how you can help, contact Nicole Pettigrew, director of Volunteers and Community Partnerships, at 719-481-4864 Ext. 111.

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@TriLakes-Seniors.org. Senior Beat can also be viewed online at www.TriLakesSeniors.org.

Can you volunteer today?

- OCN **needs your help**. See article on page 1.
- **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 omitted 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.americantowns.com/el-paso-county-co/volunteer-organizations/>.
- **The El Paso County Sheriff’s Office** Volunteer Program is composed of a collective citizens group with a true and common desire to partner with the El Paso County Sheriff’s Office by volunteering their services while learning more about the internal workings of the law enforcement community. <https://www.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.forestlakesmetro-district.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.
- El Paso County Planning Commission meeting, Thu., Aug. 3 & 17, 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://planning-development.elpasoco.com>.
- Monument Town Council meeting, Mon., Aug. 7 & 21, 6:30 pm, Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Normally meets first and third Mon. Info: 719-884-801, www.townofmonument.org/260/Board-of-Trustees for remote attendance links.
- Woodmoor Water & Sanitation District board meeting, Mon., Aug. 7, 1 pm, 1845 Woodmoor Dr., Monument. Normally meets second Mon. Info: 719-488-2525, www.woodmoorwater.com.
- Tri-Lakes Wastewater Facility Joint Use Committee meeting, Tue., Aug. 8, 10 am 16510 Mitchell Ave. Meets second Tue. Info: See <https://tlwastewater.com/index.html> Bill Burks, 719-481-4053.
- Palmer Lake Board of Adjustments, Tue., Aug. 8, 5 pm, 28 Valley Crescent St., Palmer Lake. Normally meets first Tues., as needed.
- 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, on the meeting site, see <https://www.lewispalmer.org/Page/2#calendar>. Contact info: tmckee@lewispalmer.org.
- Palmer Lake Sanitation District board meeting, Wed., Aug. 9, 9 am, call-in only: 650-479-3208, Access Code 76439078, 120 Middle Glenway. Meets second Wed. Info: 719-481-2732. www.plsd.org.
- Monument Planning Commission meeting, Wed., Aug. 9, 6 pm Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Meets second Wed. To see the options for remote public participation in each meeting, visit www.townofmonument.org/263/Planning-Commission-Board-of-Adjustment. Info: 719-884-8028. www.townofmonument.org.
- Palmer Lake Board of Trustees meeting, Thu., Aug. 10 & 24, 5 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent, Usually meets second and fourth Thu. Info: 719-481-2953. www.townofpalmerlake.com.
- Monument Sanitation District board meeting, Wed., Aug. 16, 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., Aug. 16, 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., Aug. 16, 6 pm. Usually meets third Wed. Public can join the Skype meeting: <https://join.skype.com/PACujKTn7Nrh>. Check the website for a link: <https://academywsd.colorado.gov/notices-and-alerts>. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-0711, <https://academywsd.colorado.gov>.
- Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District board meeting, in person or via Zoom, Wed., Aug. 16, 7 pm, Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining instructions at www.bffire.org or contact Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn at 719-495-4300. Meetings are usually

held on the third Wednesday.

- El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority meeting, Thu., Aug. 17, 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., Aug. 17, 1:30 pm, 15850 Holbein Dr. In 2023, meets third Thu., Check the website for the access code for the electronic meeting. Info: 719-488-3603, www.donalawater.org.
- Triview Metropolitan District board meeting, Thu., Aug. 17, 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, Meets during the school year second Thu. Info 719-481-1950, <https://www.monumentacademy.net/school-board/board-meeting-minutes/>.
- Lewis-Palmer School District 38 board meeting, Mon., Aug. 21, 6-10 pm. Normally meets third Mon. The Board of Education meeting will be live-streamed on the district’s YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/LPSDCommunity, agenda, and 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>.
- Woodmoor Improvement Association Board Meeting, Wed., Aug. 23, 7 pm, Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. The WIA Board usually meets fourth Wed. Info: 719-488-2693, www.woodmoor.org.
- Monument Fire District board meeting, in person or via Zoom, Wed., Aug. 23, 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 Sep. 27, 4:30 pm, at Station 1, 18650 Highway 105 Monument. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining instructions at <http://www.monumentfire.org> or contact Jennifer Martin, at 719-484-0911.

WEEKLY & MONTHLY EVENTS

- Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO) meeting, Sat., Sep. 9, 10 am–12 pm., Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. HOA legal topics. Members of local HOAs are 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, at 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 are open to the public. Info: RF Smith, 719-210-4987, www.MHKiwanis.org.
- 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 meetings. 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, Worship every Sun., 9 am Contemporary; 10:30 am Traditional. A live stream is available 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.
- Fellowship of Christ Church, every Sun. 9 am. 4303 Pinehurst Circle. See ad on page 6.
- 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 at info@fuel.org. See ad on page 5.
- 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 the 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 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 WØTLM (Tri-Lakes Monument ham radio Association), third Mon. All amateur ham radio operators or those interested in becoming one are welcome. Info: www.WØTLM.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.childrensliteracycenter.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. Next meeting: Tue., Aug. 8, 5 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. 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.
 - 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.
 - Downsizers Club, free. Every second Wed. 1-2 pm. Next meeting Aug. 9. Discover how to get more out of your golden years, age in place, help yourself or your parents sift through the “treasures”, leverage the value of your current home, and more. Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church, 20256 Huntingdowns Way, Monument. To sign up contact Amanda: AmandaHinnen@Homescolorado.com
 - Senior Social, fourth Wed., 12455 Black Forest Rd. Info: www.aarpchapter1100blackforest.weekly.com.
 - Pikes Peak Genealogical Society meeting, Wed., Aug. 9, “Unusual places to find births and naturalizations” by Debra Dudek. Members can log in and get the monthly meeting Zoom link. Guests are welcome to attend, please request an invitation from the PPGS president at PPGS.org.
 - 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.com.
 - 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., Aug. 16, 6:30 pm, hangout begins, 7 pm meeting begins. Guests are welcome to attend the meeting via Zoom, contact 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, no meeting in August. (Usually meets third Thu., 7 pm; doors open at 6:30 pm) Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent St., Contact: Kokesdm@yahoo.com <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, special events, and more. Info: friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com.
 - Tri-Lakes Women’s Club (TLWC) monthly meeting, now on summer break, usually the third Fri. To become a member, or learn about the club, visit our website at www.tlwc.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. 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, at (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.

SPECIAL EVENTS

- VOLUNTEER TODAY! Our Community News mailing days, Thu., Aug. 3 & 31, approx. 9 am-2 pm. We are all volunteers at OCN and need YOUR help, even for an hour or two, getting the papers ready to mail. Contact AllenAlchian@ocn.me.
- Monument Hill Farmers Market, every Sat., 8 am-2 pm. 66 Jefferson Street Monument. See ad on page 5.
- YMCA summer day camp, through Aug 4, Info: www.pymca.org/daycamp. See ad on page 6.
- Annual Hummingbird Festival at Happy Landing

- Ranch, Fri.-Sat., Aug. 4-5, 10 am-3 pm. Humming-bird watch & hourly talk, books, gifts; meet baby alpacas, enjoy fair booths, old-timey games, make giant bubbles, and more.
- Western Museum of Mining and Industry events, Farm stand, every Mon. & Wed. 9 am-6 pm; Tue., Aug. 8, 4-5 pm, Lecture: Alexander Film Company of Colorado Springs; Sat. Aug. 12, 10-3 pm, Family Day.
- Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce, Networking, Tue., Aug. 8, 5 pm-7:00 pm, members free, \$15 for non-members. Details: www.trilakeschamber.com. 719-481-3282.
- Trivia in the Park at Fox Run Regional Park. Wed. Aug. 9, 6 am-7:30 pm, Fox Run Regional Park, 2110 Stella Drive, Colorado Springs, CO, 80921. Info: (719) 520-7529.
- LAST Concert in the Park, Wed., Aug. 9, 6:30 to 8:30 pm. Limbach Park.
- Love shop, Restyle your furs event, Thu.-Fri., Aug. 10-11, 10 am-5 pm, 251 Front St., see ad on page 20.
- El Santo Vaquero Free Special Events: Thu. Aug. 10, 7-8 pm, Abracadabra, “The Power of Words,” Thu., Aug. 17, 5-8 pm during Art Hop, guest artist Janet Sellers will paint live in the courtyard; “Expression Through Art” class 7-8, author Christian Kurz 7-8 pm, 213 Washington St., Monument. Info: (719) 358-9421.
- Kings Deer Community Garage Sale, Fri.-Sun., Aug. 11-13; details: www.kingsdeer.org, see ad on page 5
- 24th annual Free Community Pig Roast and client appreciation event, Fri., Aug.11, 5:30-7:30 pm rain or shine, 236 N. Washington St., Monument. See ad on page 8.
- Kiwanis peaches pick up: Customers must pick up peaches ordered through Kiwanis on Sat., Aug. 12, 10 am- 2:00 pm at Bear Creek Elementary School 1330 Creekside Dr., Monument. Kiwanis meets Saturdays at Big Red 146 North Jefferson at 8:00 am.
- Art Hop, Thu., Aug 17, 5-8 pm., Your chance to enjoy the eclectic downtown Monument experience, buy local art, visit galleries, artists, see live demonstrations, musicians, and more. Downtown Monument. Every third Thu. through Sep. Free. See ad on page 2.
- Covered Treasures Bookstore, Art Hop, Thu., Aug. 17, 5-8 pm, author Mark Stevens will sign his baseball novel, Fireballer, 105 Second Street, Monument. Info: 719-481-2665.
- Christmas dance performance open for auditions, Sat., Aug. 19, ages 6-18. A Time to Dance. See add on page 6.
- Benet Hill Monastery, Earth Day in August. Sat., Aug. 26, 9 am-1:30 pm. Register at www.bennethillmonisterry.org/your-spiritual-journey/retreats/Earth-Day-Retreat. See ad on page 3.
- Pikes Peak Brewing Company presents John Denver tribute, Sun., Aug. 27, 1- 4 p.m (Hickabee); 6-9 pm (Cowboy Brad and the Tropicowboys). 1756 Lakewood Moore Drive Monument. See ad on page 2.
- YMCA fall youth sports registration, YMCA.org/sports. Season starts Aug. 28. See ad on page 2.
- Make It Work Clinic for PCs, FREE. Donations appreciated. We are gauging interest in helping community members with their PCs, please email us if interested. enable@monumentalimpact.org. 55 Adams St in Downtown Monument.
- Monumental Impact, Kid’s Robotics, tech, drone Summer Workshops, and Camps. More info/ register: <https://monumentalimpact.org/workshops/>.
- St Peter Catholic School, now enrolling preschool to 8th grade, PetertheRockschool.org See ad on page 2.
- Affordable Flooring Connection, summer specials. see ad on page 2.
- Cornerstone Cleaners, special offers through Aug. 31. 1030 W. Baptist Road, near King Soopers. See ad on page 4.
- Crystal’s in-home personal training. Free consultation. See ad on page 3.
- Eagle Wine & Spirits, special offers through Aug. 31. Baptist Road next to King Soopers. See ad on page 3.
- Gleneagle Candle Co., special offers through Aug. 31. 13796 Gleneagle Drive 80921. See ad on page 4.
- Monument Cleaners, special offers through Aug. 31, 15932 Jackson Creek Pkwy., in Monument Marketplace. See ad on page 5.
- Monumental Med Spa, special offers for August. See ad on page 7.
- Noel Relief Centers, new patient specials. 950 Baptist Rd #130, Monument. See ad on page 7.
- The Living Room Plants, special offers through Aug. 31, 12229 Voyager Pkwy, Suite 100. See ad on page 5.
- Palmer Lake Wellness: mention the ad for special offer, see ad on page 12.
- The Vanity Box, special offers, facial revivals, and more. See ad on page 3.
- Tri-Lakes Collision and Auto Service Center, special offers through Aug. 31. 2101 Wolf Court, Monument. www.trilakescollision.com. See ad on page 5.

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.

- Labor Day weekend art festival: Sat.-Mon., Sep. 2-4, 10-5 pm, Free, Manitou Springs Memorial Park. See ad on page 9.
- Never Dead Riders Motorcycle Group Poker Run, Sat., Sep. 23. Non-profit to raise funds to help people with a family member with cancer. Info: www.neverdeadriders.net

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 send the information to calendar@ocn.me or Our Community News, P.O. Box 1742, Monument, Colorado 80132.



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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, Sep. 2

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

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



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

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Monument Hill Club



Meeting Saturdays @ Big Red (146 N Jefferson) 8:00am

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- Monument Hill Kiwanis Service (MHKC) Leadership Program (SLP) clubs are available at all D38 schools
- MHKC organizes and mentors student-led SLP clubs to enrich school experience and build life skills
- 2022-2023 MHKC SLP students volunteered more than 1,000 hours of their time, collected 11,333 lbs. of food for Tri-Lakes Cares and raised more than \$11,000 to improve our community
- Find out about the Kiwanis SLP club at the email or look on the Kiwanis web site listed below.
- High School Key Club, Middle School Builders Club, Elementary School K-Kids Club

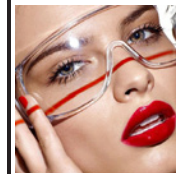
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