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We now have audio posted for many of the recent articles and videos for some events.

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 21-23 for event locations and other details of these and many other local events.

- OCN mailing days, Thu., Aug. 31 & Oct. 5, approx. 9 am–2 pm.
- Benet Hill Monastery: Celebrate the Season of Creation, Fri., Sep. 1 to Wed., Oct. 4. See ad on page 3.
- Labor Day weekend art festival, Sat.-Mon., Sep. 2-4, 10-5 pm. www.commonwheel.com/festival.html. Manitou.
- Monu-Palooza music festival, Sun., Sep. 3, Limbach Park. Music 12:30 to 8:00 pm.
- Wreaths Across America (WAA) invites all Americans to Wave the Flag on Tue., Sep. 12.
- Kiwanis Fundraiser for Heart of Monument Play Park (HoMPP), Thu. Sep. 14, 5-9 pm.
- Run4Hope 5K for Schools, Sat. Sep. 16. 9 a.m.
- 100+ Women Who Care: Social Gathering, membership drive. Wed., Sep. 20, 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.
- YMCA 5K race series. Early bird pricing ends Sep. 15. See ad on page 6.
- Last 2023 Art Hop, Thu., Sep. 21, 5-8 pm. See ad on page 2.
- Palmer Lake Historical Society, Thu., Sep. 21, 7 pm
- Fox Run Regional Park Lights Fest, Fri., Sep. 22, 4:30-8:30pm.
- Never Dead Riders Motorcycle Group Poker Run, Sat., Sep. 23. See ad on page 5.
- Little Log Church will hold a Service in the Park, Sun., Sep. 24.
- Eagle Wine and Spirits Charity Whiskey Live and Silent Auction, Thu., Sep. 28, 5:30-8 pm. See ad on page 2.
- Front Range Maker's Market, Sat.-Sun., Oct. 28 - 29. See ad on page 24.

Empty Bowl Dinner and Silent Auction, Oct. 4, 5-7:30 pm! See ad on page 7.

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Construction causes dangerous traffic backups

Above: Aug. 15, the first day of school for all D38 schools, showed significant traffic backups by many schools due to several construction projects, including the Highway 105 and Jackson Creek Parkway expansions, along with other road projects by the county and special districts. At 3:30 p.m., the line of cars heading west on Highway 105 for the Monument Academy pickup was 45 cars long, with at least an equal number heading east on Vista Ridge Point to the front of the school. Cars were also backed up heading east on Highway 105 from the I-25 offramp, heading north on Knollwood Drive to MA, south on Woodmoor Drive past Lewis-Palmer Middle School, and Jackson Creek Parkway and Higby Road near Lewis-Palmer High School. While carlines are always challenging in the first weeks of school due to new routes and new parents, the construction added to the chaos. Cars were stuck at lights for multiple cycles due to cars blocking intersections. Some bus drivers deviated from their normal routes to avoid the worst traffic. By the second day, the district had adjusted some bus routes, and the Monument Police Department had deployed some officers to help direct traffic at the busiest intersections. The county Department of Public Works is considering opening an additional road to help with the traffic situation. Please be careful on our roads and look out for students and other drivers. For more information, see <http://EPC-Hwy105AConstruction.com/> and <http://www.jacksoncreekpkway.com>, as well as your school's website for carline procedures and bus routes. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

Monument Academy School Board, Aug. 10 and 19

Board receives ACLU demand letter

By Jackie Burhans

The Monument Academy (MA) board called a rare Saturday special meeting on Aug. 19 to discuss a demand letter from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) on their resolution, proclamation, and policies regarding transgender, gender nonconforming, and nonbinary students.

At its regular meeting on Aug. 10, MA's board heard about a new quarterly dashboard, enrollment updates, carline information, and finances.

Board discusses ACLU demand letter

The MA board met at 4 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 19, to go into executive session for legal advice on specific legal matters regarding a demand letter received by legal counsel, to discuss security measures, and to discuss personnel matters with prior notice. All board members were present, along with the board's lawyer, Brad Miller of Miller Farmer Carson Law LLC.

The board returned after an hour to unanimously approve the creation of a Legal Affairs subcommittee to address issues regarding their resolution. Board President Ryan Graham and Director Karen Hoida will serve on the subcommittee. Graham explained that MA had received a demand letter from the ACLU of Colorado addressing its recent resolution regarding transgen-

der students. There was no imminent threat of litigation, he said.

The letter, which is included in MA's board meeting highlight document, is titled "Unlawful actions of Monument Academy and its school board" and says that MA's actions undermine the safety and well-being of transgender, gender nonconforming, and nonbinary students and flout multiple state and federal laws. ACLU notes that the refusal to provide students access to restrooms consistent with their gender is prohibited by the Colorado Anti-Discrimination Act (CADA) per CRS 24-34-601 and that MA's dress code impermissibly treats students differently based on gender, which violates CADA as well as students' constitutional rights to freedom of expression.

Finally, the ACLU characterizes MA's recent resolution as signaling its open hostility to transgender, gender nonconforming, and nonbinary students, as well as to Colorado and federal nondiscrimination laws. The ACLU requested a substantive response from MA by Aug. 31 and reserves all rights to file necessary legal action to ensure compliance with Colorado and federal law. You can see the demand letter at <https://bit.ly/MA-ACLU-Demand>.

MA (Cont. on 2)

Woodmoor Improvement Association, Aug. 23

Board hears about possible extension of Furrow Road

By Jackie Burhans

At its Aug. 23 meeting, the Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) board heard about traffic-related issues and solutions and discussed moving its investments to higher interest-bearing accounts. Board directors provided updates in each of their areas of responsibility.

Furrow Road extension back on the table

The WIA board discussed area traffic issues stemming from construction projects and the start of the school year. President Brian Bush commended Woodmoor Public Safety (WPS) Chief Kevin Nielsen for providing guid-

ance about the change in WPS' role in school traffic control.

Public Safety Director Brad Gleason reported that Highway 105 has transitioned to night work for at least another week, and the complete closure of Knollwood Drive has been delayed until early September. He also reported that the El Paso County Department of Public Works was also considering opening Furrow Road south of Highway 105 to Higby Road as soon as feasible, making traffic more efficient for emergency vehicles. Note: Furrow Road is closed off south of Highway 105 at Lamplight Drive.

WIA (Cont. on 6)

Triview Metropolitan District, Aug. 17

Water usage sets record high

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Triview Metropolitan District (TMD) meeting on Aug. 17, the board heard about recording breaking high-water usage in July, approved a water use agreement and the completion of a new park, and received an update on the Northern Delivery System (NDS) pipeline project. The district held an executive session that resulted in an exclusion of property.

Water usage reaches all-time high

Superintendent Shawn Sexton said that July set a record high for water pumped at about 49 million gallons, with a 9% variance. All wells are available, and all three plants are running well. The district is approaching an extended period of pumping capacity at 17.5 gallons per minute, and that can be problematic, he said.

District Manager James McGrady said August is looking equally high for water usage, pumping 2.2-2.3 million gallons per day. The district has seven or eight wells running and can meet the demand without using the ninth. The NDS pipeline will make a huge difference once operational and will meet the demands of the district at buildout, he said.

Vice President Anthony Sexton said it might be the last July the district pumped well water.

President Mark Melville said if a problem occurs with the NDS, the district has about a million gallons of water in the tanks, about one day's worth of storage capacity. In an emergency, the tanks would provide the residents with enough water to take a shower in the morning, but the district has the capability to pump about 1.5 million to 2 million gallons of groundwater a day to maintain supply to the district, he said.

Water use agreement

Water Attorney Chris Cummins said that late that afternoon, a water use sharing agreement had been reached between Triview and the Arkansas Ground and Reservoir Association (AGRA), both representing the majority ownership of the Excelsior Irrigating

TRIVIEW (Cont. on 7)

MA (Cont. from 1)

Quarterly dashboard overview
Interim Chief Operating Officer Kim

McClelland introduced consultant Jennifer Strawbridge of Analytical Discoveries, who is helping the school create a dashboard to present a deep dive into

academic growth to the community.

Strawbridge presented baseline results from the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years. She said she loves working with leadership teams and helping people understand how they can best use this information to drive instruction and improve academic achievement. She color-coded the dashboard to show how it is related to MA's mission statement.

Strawbridge showed the results from the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), which breaks achievement data into four categories: above, at, below, and well below for grade level. The dashboard compares one year to the following year, and the goal is to see the "at" and "above" bars increase. The tests done at the beginning of the year can show a "summer slide," indicating testing challenges more than knowledge loss, she said. Testing is also done mid-year and at the end of the year to capture growth for kindergarten through third grade and the beginning and end of the year only from fourth to eighth grade.

Next, Strawbridge showed the

NWEA (formerly Northwest Evaluation Association) MAP data, which goes beyond reading and divides results into quintiles. NWEA was acquired in May 2023 by Houghton Mifflin. Her chart had a dashed line for the grade-level achievement score in each subject area. Again, she noted that this dashboard was a baseline they could use to track improvement. NWEA looks at the median growth percentile (MGP), where MA students are compared against other students nationally who have the same starting score and grade level. MGP helps to adjust for any skewing that might take place with students who show very low or very high growth. Strawbridge said that MGP is one of the most important pieces of data when looking at growth since it tells you if a school is growing kids academically.

Middle and high school students take the PSAT and SAT, respectively, and that data is currently embargoed, so will be presented in the Q1 dashboard.

In addition to academics, the dashboards will track attendance and discipline, both of which are correlated with academic achievement and growth. Strawbridge reviewed specific data, pointing out where scores were good and where they needed work. McClelland said parents will be able to see this information under the strategic plan in the school board section of the website at <https://bit.ly/ma-boe>.

Strawbridge said that the participation level in DIBELS and NWEA MAP is near 100%, unlike the Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) tests. She noted that CMAS and NWEA are correlated but that the state won't use NWEA data unless you qualify for the "request to reconsider" process that the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) uses for schools that disagree with the initial CDE rating of its school performance framework. MA is not eligible for the "request to reconsider" process, which requires that 90% of its students take the state assessment without opting out.

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McClelland said she wanted to be clear about the ratio and the need to boost enrollment, noting that MA would be putting out yard signs to get the word out. The number one reason people are not enrolling in MA is that they are choosing to homeschool, she said, followed by choosing to enroll in district-run schools in D38 or D20, and concerns about construction and car-



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McClelland said getting the word out on how carpooling and the carline would work was important. Information, including a video for phase 1 access to the West Campus, is on the website. This information was shared at town halls, meet-and-greet meetings, and using the new ParentSquare platform. Information about the significant changes to the

For more information, email carline@monumentacademy.net or see the MA website under the parents section at <https://bit.ly/MA-Carline>. Information on the Highway 105 construction project can be found at <http://EPC-Hwy105AConstruction.com/>.

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Finances

Financial consultant Glenn Gustafson reported that the pre-audit June 30 financial statements were available, but he was waiting for D38 to finish its audit and reconcile with MA. Preliminary results show that revenues exceed expenses by \$88,000, but he expects

additional revenue from special education (SPED) funds in September.

Gustafson said the new audit firm, Hoelting & Co., has significant experience in charter school accounting. The firm was in MA for two days with non-stop requests for information. He complimented Business Manager Diane Smith for her recordkeeping and documentation of expenditures and deposits.

The July books are closed, and the financial statements are in the hands of the Finance Committee, which will schedule a meeting to review. All budgets are in the black, unlike last year, Gustafson said. He

noted that bringing payroll back in-house would save about \$4,000 per month after initial conversion costs. The next conversion this fall will be the purchasing module so administrators and teachers can use its electronic workflow to speed up approvals.

Finally, Gustafson said he did some work over the summer at another charter school that qualified for the employee retention tax credit (ERTC) refund. The ERTC is available for businesses and tax-exempt organizations that had employees and were affected during the COVID-19 pandemic. Not all charter schools qualify, so he engaged a consultant to do a feasibility study for free to see if MA qualified. If MA does qualify, the consultant would receive a 5% fee. To apply for the ERTC takes a lot of work, Gustafson noted, requiring records back to 2020, but could result in a significant refund.

Highlights

Board meeting highlights include:

- Board member Craig Carlie spotlighted the work of Kendra Kuhlmann, who works in Marketing, for streamlining the communication and marketing effort. Kuhlmann presented at the meeting on the rollout of the new parent communication platform ParentSquare, detailing the progress and backup plans and noting the challenges.
- McClelland introduced the discussion of new and updated supplementary materials and video resource policies IIAC-MA, IIAC-E1-MA, IIAC-E2-MA, IJ-MA, and IJ-E1-MA. She noted that MA would adopt the standard nomenclature used by D38 for its policies but with MA at the end to differentiate those modified by MA. McClelland said she wanted to have legal review the changes before final adoption. Approved MA board policies can be found at <https://bit.ly/ma-bd-policies>.
- Kennington and middle school Principal Collin Vinchattle discussed updates to the East Campus Handbook, noting changes around attendance, late submission, phone usage, carline, and student parking. The board asked for updates to board candidate qualifications and the volunteer management system but proposed forgoing curriculum policy changes since those were not yet approved. The board unanimously approved the handbook with these changes.
- McClelland said the portables would not be available on day one as they need additional work on ramps, fencing, and electrical work, followed by a final walkthrough and certificate of occupancy. Kennington said there were alternative plans in place and that it was a matter of weeks, not months, before the portables would be ready.
- The board unanimously approved a motion to move the board meetings from 6 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. This change was made to avoid conflict with sports practices and to allow more time for the board to socialize.

The MA School Board meets at 6:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. The next regular board meeting will be on Thursday, Sept. 14, at 6:30 p.m. at the East Campus. See more information at <https://bit.ly/ma-boe>.

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

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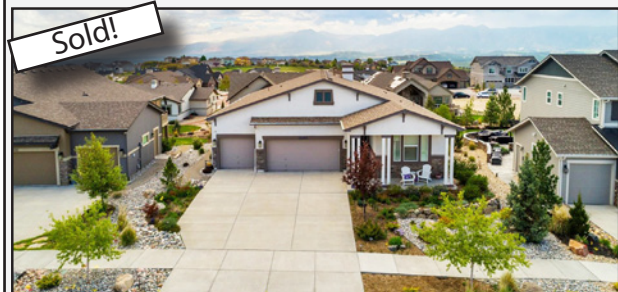
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Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education, Aug. 21

Four-day week, capital improvements, tutoring center discussed

By Harriet Halbig

At its Aug. 21 meeting, the Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education received a report from the district's Calendar Task Force that included feasibility of a four-day school week, a report on capital improvements achieved during the summer, and an introduction to the revitalized tutoring center at Lewis-Palmer High School.

Calendar Task Force report

Assistant Superintendent Amber Whetstone provided a report of the Calendar Task Force. The task force consists of board representative Tiffney Upchurch, an administrative liaison, parents, members of the Parent and Community Advisory Committee, members of the Staff Collaboration Committee, teachers, and staff.

The task force met during the summer to determine its priorities, degree of interest in a four-day week schedule and its impact on start time, length of days, and length of the school year.

Members discussed the impact of such a schedule with other districts which have adopted it.

Preliminary conclusions are that Monday would be the day off for students, school days and the school year would be longer, and results of these discussions would be presented to the Staff Collaboration Committee at its September meeting.

Following that meeting there will be a survey of staff to determine their acceptance of the concept.

Board Vice President Theresa Phillips asked about the impact on the quality of education in the new schedule.

Whetstone responded that this is one of the aspects members will ask other districts about.

Board Treasurer Ron Schwarz asked when families will be consulted.

Whetstone responded that if it is determined that the change in schedule would not increase retention of staff, families would not be consulted.

Board President Upchurch asked whether waivers would be required to alter the number of instruction hours if necessary.

Whetstone said that is yet to be determined.

Most of the districts which have adopted a four-day week are relatively rural in character.

Capital improvement report

Executive Director of Operations and Development Chris Coulter reported on capital improvements achieved during the summer months.

The primary project is the construction of a new corridor in Lewis-Palmer Elementary School to bring the building up to code for fire safety. The original proposed project was halted by the Regional Building Department and was increased in scope as a result.

The project involved removal of existing walls,

doors, and ceilings in the corridor to expedite exits from classrooms to exterior doors. Additional panels to access the ventilation system were also brought to fire-rated levels. Wiring within the walls was replaced, a new intercom system was installed, and all lights and flooring were also replaced.

The unexpected scope of the project resulted in a cost overrun of \$130,000 which was covered by contingency funds. The board voted to approve the overrun.

In preparing a five-year plan for capital improvements, Coulter explained that it was necessary to identify critical repairs and life safety issues, document deferred maintenance issues, and consider projects underway.

Some considerations include renovations to update classrooms for use in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) instruction, career and technical education, visual and performing arts, and special education programs.

Coulter also spoke of continuing programs under the contract with Schneider Electric to improve energy efficiency in the district. He said that replacing light bulbs and fixtures has made a difference in the number of kilowatt hours used, but until the systems

are automated to shut down when buildings are not in use the maximum benefit will not be realized.

Kilowatt usage in July was 36% lower than the previous year.

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To view detailed descriptions of all projects, please refer to boarddocs in the Board of Education section of the lewispalmer.org website.

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Ranger Tutoring Center report

Lewis-Palmer High School Gifted/Talented facilitator Laura Stamp presented a description of the revitalized tutoring center at the school, assisted by four student tutors.

Stamp explained that the tutoring center is administered as an elective class which counts for half a credit. The goal of the center is to normalize the idea that it is OK to ask for help, not only with academic issues but also with emotional problems.

All tutors are students at the school who undergo seven periods of training in the area of social/emotional wellness. It is found that some of the individuals who seek tutoring do so because of difficulty advocating for themselves or making friends in a new environment. Tutors are not expected to be experts in any given subject but advise clients in areas of their own interest.

The tutors become mentors to their clients and commented that the clients value the fact that this has enabled them to make friends in other classes. This results in more of a family or community feeling at the school.

Stamp said that there were 18 tutors last semester and 95 clients. Over 400 sessions occurred during the semester.

Several of the current tutors were previous clients and saw the value of the program.

Stamp said that she gave a presentation at a recent meeting of the Colorado Association of School Executives in Colorado Springs and has been invited to appear before the state organization.

Superintendent KC Somers commented that this additional support shows students that it's OK to be behind. Tutoring is designed not only to solve a particular academic problem but to create relationships.

Upchurch asked how the board and community can help to support the program.

Stamp responded that the program has received grants from Monument Hill Kiwanis and the Tri-Lakes Women's Club.

She invited any interested parties to contact her at lstamp@lewispalmer.org.

Hiring update

Director of Human Resources Alicia Welch said the district has hired 102 new individuals of whom 53 are teachers and 49 are classified.

Classified employees include paraprofessionals, food and nutrition employees, bus drivers, school office staff, pre-K instructional support, and custodians.

Base pay for all was increased due to increased state funding.

Welch said that in addition to the increased base pay, there were bonuses for new hires and increased compensation for substitutes and those in special education and specialized services.

She said that a few of the new hires were previous employees of the district and returned due to the increased compensation. Another attraction was the fact that the district is giving credit for an increased number of years of experience.

Welch said that she intends to conduct exit interviews at the end of the school year and to administer surveys to determine staff satisfaction.

Election contract

The board approved an intergovernmental agreement to participate in the November election. A 50% deposit of \$17,007 was required by Aug. 29. Vicki Wood was designated as the district's representative.

Superintendent update

Somers announced the arrival of three new principals in the new school year. They are Donnell Potter at Bear Creek Elementary, Greg Saunders at Kilmer Elementary, and Brittanie Coveney at Prairie Winds Elementary.

He also announced a Board of Education Candidate Forum to be held at Palmer Ridge High School at 6 p.m. on Sept. 28. The event is sponsored by the Tri-Lakes Chamber.

The Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education meets at 6 p.m. on the third Monday of the month in the district's learning center, 146 N. Jefferson St., Monument. The next meeting will be on Sept. 18.

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



Above: At the August Woodmoor Improvement Association board meeting, Director Brad Gleason and Woodmoor Public Safety Chief Kevin Nielsen noted that the county is looking into removing the barriers at Furrow Road and Lamplight Drive to allow traffic to proceed south to Higby Road. This extension had been discussed in 2021 and tabled in February 2022. At the time, consultants and county engineers noted that the road would probably have to be opened by 2040 per the county's Master Transportation Corridor Plan or sooner if there was an extended emergency or an increased pace of development that required traffic relief. The county had discussed plans to install traffic calming measures to address residents' concerns. Photo by Jackie Burhans.

WIA (Cont. from 1)

Vice President Peter Bille asked if the county was talking about extending Furrow after they said they wouldn't at an Aug. 17, 2022, community meeting. See photo caption in the OCN September 2022 issue at www.ocn.me/v22n9.htm#photos.

At that meeting, Stantec consultants said they did not recommend extending Furrow Road at that time, though a county engineer anticipated it might be needed by 2040 according to the Major Transportation Corridors Plan or in the case of a long-term significant emergency or if an increased pace of development required traffic relief. The road, Bille said,

would not be extended without implementing the traffic calming measures discussed at that meeting.

Nielsen noted that the Monument Fire District (MFD) was pushing to have Furrow extended. He said some logistical things need to happen before the county removes the barriers. Asked if they might shut it down when the construction is done, Nielsen said he wasn't sure but noted that the road was always intended to be open, but he thought they might have to close again temporarily to complete the traffic calming measures.

Finally, Bush noted that Wildcat, the firm working on Highway 105, had 25 loads of dirt to deliver to a builder who needed it but could only do so between 7 p.m. and 10 p.m., so he granted the exception to do so on behalf of the board. He said the contractor had contacted almost all the neighbors and hoped to take delivery this coming weekend.

Note: For updates on Highway 105, please see: <http://EPC-Hwy105AConstruction.com/>

Board moves investments, reviews finances

Bush said that WIA was converting assets into higher interest-bearing accounts. Some of the money had been locked into Certificates of Deposits (CDs), which have come or are coming due. He said that WIA was working with its financial advisor to roll that money into accounts that would yield 5% to 5.5% as compared to less than 2% for CDs. He said that WIA would invest in more liquid instruments to take advantage of future actions by the Federal Reserve.

He said expenses are generally well in hand thanks to the staff, though the \$175 budget for property taxes was exceeded (a total of \$900) due to taxes on The Preserve. He asked that staff work on improved projections as WIA moves into its budgeting cycle, noting that expenses for The Preserve were taken out of the prior year's operational funds but would come into the current budget at some point.

Board highlights

- Resident Jennifer Davis thanked the board for its July meeting with South Woodmoor residents soliciting feedback on the South Woodmoor Preserve improvements.
- Covenants Director Per Suhr reported three covenant hearings in July and August for fireworks use, a barking dog, and a loose dog, resulting in fines.
- Gleason reported that the new vehicles are in

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use, and each has pros and cons, with one having a better backup camera and visibility and the other getting 48 to 52 miles per gallon compared to 20. Bush provided feedback to the officers that taking good care of their vehicles allowed WIA to get money for selling old Jeeps to help fund these new vehicles.

- Architectural Control Director Ed Miller reported that 62 projects had been submitted in July, with 52 approved in the office and nine approved by the Architectural

Control Committee for a 98.89% approval rate year-to-date. In 2023 WIA has had 329 projects to date, which is a decrease of 15.6% over 2022.

- Forestry Administrator Justin Gates reported 12 Firewise and forestry health visits in July, noting that the rate has been slowing down for wildfire mitigation projects. There is still money available in the 50/50 matching grant for mitigation work, he said, and agreed to send out an email blast as well as write a newsletter article

encouraging residents to sign up.

- Common Areas Director Steve Cutler reported that the parking lot by The Barn had been resealed and restriped and that common areas identified as areas of concern had been mitigated in July and August.
- Bush reported that the Country Club at Woodmoor would be digging a trench for its new bathroom near hole 5 in the coming week and had already completed the sewer hookup for a new bathroom near hole 13. The bathrooms are

not yet functional.

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 Sep. 27.

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.

TRIVIEW (Cont. from 1)

Co. The agreement allows both entities to use each other's water rights, with written notice, when necessary, when those water shares are not in use, he said.

McGrady said the district is having a banner year capturing water, 120% above average, but needs to think about water storage a couple of years down the road. The district will always top off Stonewall Springs Reservoir before selling water and ensure the district is taken care of first, he said.

The board unanimously approved the agreement.

NDS update

McGrady said the NDS pipeline installation is almost completed from B plant to Stage Coach Road, representing about two-thirds of the pipeline. The project is on track and under budget, and all the pipeline will be installed by September, he said. Baptist, Roller Coaster, and Northgate Roads will be paved out with a 2-inch overlay by the end of October.

Director Sexton asked if the new fire hydrants could be protected from vehicles in any way.

McGrady said the hydrants are designed to break off during collisions, and if damage occurs frequently the district would consider moving a hydrant back a few feet, but replacing hydrants occasionally will be part of the game. He informed Fire Chief Andy Kovacs that all the hydrants will be charged in the next few weeks, and Kovacs is thrilled to have fire protection for the first time in Black Forest. The pump station (at the intersection of Old Northgate Road on the eastside of Highway 83) foundation is being formed and poured and will be dried in by October. The district staff will begin installing electrical and pumps inside during the winter with an anticipated completion date in July 2024, he said.

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

Renewable water

During public comments, this reporter requested information on renewable reuse water return flows to the district.

Melville said the district-owned water mostly flows through homes to

the Upper Monument Creek Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility, where it is treated before flowing downstream. Flows are exchanged or captured in the Big Johnson Reservoir, or at the Stonewall Springs Reservoir via the Southern Delivery System/Arkansas River, where it can be used to extinction. The district puts about an acre-foot or 326,000 gallons into Monument Creek per day, to be captured and reused. The district plans (with the 1041 permits already in place) to capture its water and return those flows via the NDS pipeline. It was part of the district's strategy to move to a renewable/reuse water system and be less reliant on groundwater from the Denver Basin aquifer system, said Mel-

ville.

Cummins said Forest Lakes Metropolitan District (FLMD) anticipates taking part in the NDS system and using some of the TMD excess pipeline capacity to deliver return flows to FLMD but not TMD water. It is unclear how FLMD return flows will be captured and returned for reuse, he said. See FLMD article on page 9.

Employee retirement plan change

Assistant District Manager Steve Sheffield said that when he was hired, he tried to roll over his retirement plan and the response he received from Lincoln Financial was not helpful, result-



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ing in considerable time fixing the transfer. After discussing the potential change with the district staff, everyone agreed the switch would be beneficial. He requested the board review and approve Resolution 2023-06, a resolution of the TMD Board of Directors to change the retirement fund managers from Lincoln Financial to Corebridge Financial.

The board unanimously approved the resolution.

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

- Agate Creek Park and the adjacent trails are complete (see photo with caption).
- Old Creek Park has been completed, with the addition of a shade structure pavilion area and picnic table. Some of the other parks will receive shade structures in the future.
- The district plans to repair in house the crack seal projects with a focus on Sanctuary Rim Road. Instead of a three- or four-day contract, the district will rent the machine for a month for the same cost of about \$20,000.
- Some grading and berms will be used to divert excess water draining from St. Lawrence Way and the Plant B tract out toward Gleneagle Drive.
- Removable lockable bollards will be installed on some trails to prevent an ongoing issue with residents encroaching into the trail system. The use of heavy equipment to access yards for construction and landscaping had the potential to cause damage. Residents are required to contact the dis-

trict for property access via easements.

- The district had planned to install a permanent enclosed Porta-Potty station at the Little Train Park in Promontory Pointe, but contract servicing would cost about \$500 per month for two units (about \$5,000 a season). The district purchased two units for about \$1,200, and the Vactor truck will service the units when it arrives in the district. The units will be positioned where needed for events.

Director Sexton said the Little Train Park in Promontory Pointe looked good for the 80 residents that attended the movie night, and many good comments were received.

Director Jason Gross thanked Rayno and the crews for stepping up and not just doing the minimum when working on the landscaping throughout the district.

Sanctuary Pointe Park completion close

Steve Schlosser, Classic Homes project manager for the west side of Monument Junction and a resident of Sanctuary Pointe, proposed the board consider Rocky Mountain Turf Solutions install 150,000 square feet of UV protected AstroTurf for the planned soccer/lacrosse multi-use field in Sanctuary Pointe. The park would also receive sidewalks, a shade structure, natural stone stadium seating on the northeast side with trees planted to look like they are part of the forest to provide additional shade for spectators, he said.

Rayno said AstroTurf is less maintenance for the district than natural grass.

Director Amanda Carlton said artificial grass had been linked to cancer due to the PFAS, or per-and polyfluoro-



Above: Agate Creek Park facing west with the sun setting over Mount Herman on Aug. 22. The project to completely overhaul and enhance the park and the adjoining trail system began after the tie in of the 16-inch main pipeline for the Northern Delivery System project destroyed the trail during the installation process. The project was completed by the district staff in early August. *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*

alkyl substances—so-called “forever chemicals.”

Cummins said Palmer Lake had also debated using AstroTurf because of the plastic pellets contained under the plastic blades.

Schlosser said a new mesh system is designed to hold the pellets in place, unlike the old design.

Rayno said signs for the correct use of the AstroTurf sporting field will be installed at the park.

McGrady said the Sanctuary Pointe Homeowners Association paid about \$3,000 per home for the park development, and Classic Homes has contributed and pledged to complete the park. No other sporting field exists in the district, and artificial turf would be beneficial, he said. TMD would split the cost and pay \$1 million toward the project. There is room to park on either side of Sanctuary Rim Road, and about 60 parking spaces

are available at the park.

Schlosser said the district would be responsible for booking the facility, and program revenues from clubs and events using the facility would return to the district for the maintenance of the park. The turf product has the least number of injuries within the artificial turf industry, and he estimated a mid- to late September completion, followed by a ribbon-cutting event, he said.

McGrady requested the board review and consider approval of a funding agreement between Collin Elite 1 LLC and TMD concerning the sharing of costs for developing a neighborhood park in the Sanctuary Pointe development in Monument, with authorization for the district manager to sign the agreement.

The board approved the resolution 4-1, with Carlton dissenting.

Schlosser said he would

contact the company and request product safety information.

Conexus property exclusion

McGrady said a swale, typically a cattle grazing pasture, exists in the district between the I-25 southbound ramp, the Santa Fe Trail, and south of Second Street. The land is adjacent to the Conexus-owned property and will create a maintenance issue if it remains in the district.

Melville opened a public hearing for resolution 2023-07 and, hearing no comments, promptly closed the hearing.

McGrady requested the board review and approve Resolution 2023-07, a resolution of the TMD Board of Directors, accepting a Petition for the Exclusion of Real Property from TMD known as Tracts D and E of Conexus Filing Number 2.

Director Sexton asked why the district would consider excluding the land and requested the board discuss the exclusion further in executive session.

The board unanimously approved tabling the resolution for further discussion in executive session.

Note: Gross left the meeting at 8:02 p.m., before the executive session.

Executive session

The board moved into an executive session at 8:39 p.m., pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes 24-6-402(4) (a), (b), (c), to discuss acquisitions and negotiations and receive legal advice regarding water and property acquisitions, change cases, the Higby Road design, and resolution 2023-07, a petition for exclusion of real property.

After the meeting, Sheffield confirmed that the board returned to the regular meeting at 9:19 p.m. and voted on resolution 2023-07 pertaining to the exclusion of property from the district (Conexus property). The motion passed 3-1, with Carlton dissenting.

The board adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

Meetings are usually held on the third Thursday every month at the district office at 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Sept. 21 at 5:30 p.m. For meeting agendas, minutes, and updates, visit <https://triviewmetro.com>.

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

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Forest Lakes Metropolitan District, Pinon Pines 1, 2, and 3, Aug. 7 and 14

2022 audits approved; contract services cost increases; water reuse project possible

By Natalie Barszcz
The Forest Lakes Metropolitan District (FLMD) Pinon Pines Metropolitan District (PPMD) 2 and 3 boards met on Aug. 7 to approve the 2022 audits and a second amendment to the agreement for the contract for services with Triview Metropolitan District (TMD). The boards also received updates on the Northern Monument Creek Interceptor Project (NMCI) and the Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) Indirect Potable Reuse Project, and held an executive session related to intergovernmental agreements. The PPMD 1 all-resident board held a “special meeting” on Aug. 14 to reappoint President Mike Hitchcock to the board, approve the 2022 audit, and accept the board financial reports. Note: Both meetings were held via teleconference. The boards had not met since December 2022.

Treasurer Douglas Stimple, chief executive officer of Classic Homes, was excused.

2022 audits
District Manager Ann Nichols said the board directors had previously received the full packet containing the 2022 audits for FLMD and PPMD 2 and 3 and, after receiving no comments, CPA Tom Sistare of Hoelting & Co. Inc. had filed the audits with the state to meet the July 31 deadline. The audits were “usual” and the financial controls were good except for PPMD 3, which had been audit exempt until 2023. In early 2022 it was discovered that some of the Public Improvement Fee (PIF) revenue belonged in 2021 and that her original estimate for PIF in 2022 was much higher than \$240,000. The PIF revenue in 2022 was \$455,000, significantly higher than in previous years. The PIF is estimated to be considerably more when the “Quik Trip” opens in the Falcon Commerce Center, said Nichols.

The board approved the 2022 audits as presented for all three boards, 4-0.

Contract for services with TMD
Nichols said a conversation with TMD Manager James McGrady revealed that the initial estimate for the contract for service agreement with TMD initially approved for \$6,000 per month was not enough because the agreement was made before the 2023 budget, and a second amendment increasing the monthly cost to \$6,700, back dated to July 2023, was needed. The TMD staff is doing a good job in the district, and about \$4,000 is certainly justified for the remainder of the year, said Nichols.

See www.ocn.me/v22n8.htm#flmd and www.ocn.me/v22n8.htm#tmd.
Secretary James Boulton, vice president/project manager of Classic Homes, asked if TMD would be replacing dead trees and providing trail maintenance and snow removal service.

Nichols said those services would be provided at an hourly rate for time spent, plus materials when needed. An amendment will be made to the contract services amendment, she said.

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

NMCI
Nichols said it was anticipated that CSU would request bids on the design for the NMCI in early 2023, but issues arose with the design that went through an old landfill on the U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA) property. The USAFA is now in agreement with a design that will route the pipeline around the airfield, and it is close to signing the National Environment Policy Act assessment and approval of the re-routed design. The design phase is way behind, but the request for proposals was scheduled to be sent out by the end of August. By the end of the year or as late as spring a cost estimate of the design will be known, then FLMD can decide on the most efficient route to proceed.

FLMD and TMD are committed to seeing the design phase through but will not proceed with the construction of the NMCI pipeline until all costs are known. As a factor in the decision process, the districts are also seeking the scope and cost of upgrading the Upper Monument Creek Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility to meet the state requirements, said Nichols.

Wastewater return flows possible
Nichols said the Northern Delivery System (NDS) pipeline project TMD is developing will connect into CSU to convey, treat, and deliver water to customers in northern El Paso County. CSU continues to explore recapturing return flows with the Indirect Potable Reuse Project (formerly the reuse project under the Pikes Peak Regional Water Authority) for districts participating in the NMCI pipeline project. Wastewater would be delivered via the NMCI and treated at the J.D. Phillips Water Resource Recovery Facility on Mark Dabling Boulevard, and reuse flows would then be recaptured down Monument Creek at some point. CSU has identified six alternative arrange-

ments to collect reuse water for treatment in Monument and Fountain Creeks before sending water to the Southern Delivery System. The projects are linked, and the costs may be presented to the board in the next couple of months, said Nichols. See www.ocn.me/v23n1.htm#flmd and the TMD article on page 1.

Executive session
The PPMD 2 and 3 boards and Tom Blunk and William Muller of CP Real Estate Capital, representing Forest Lakes LLC and Forest Lakes Residential Development, moved into an executive session at 4:17 p.m., pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes 24-6-402(4) (b) and (e) to receive specific legal advice from district counsel Russell Dykstra of Spencer Fane LLP and instruct negotiators in matters related to intergovernmental agreements.

Nichols confirmed to OCN that after the boards returned to the regular meeting, no action was taken, and the meeting promptly adjourned at 4:38 p.m.

PPMD 1
Nichols said that due to a miscommunication, Hitchcock had missed the deadline to file a self-nomination form for another four-year term on the PPMD 1 Board of Directors, and he would need to be appointed to the board.

President Mike Slavick and A J Slavick approved the appointment, and Hitchcock confirmed he had been read the oath of office by a notary. The board members approved Hitchcock be reinstated as board president. Mike Slavick returned to the vice president position, and A J Slavick is the board secretary. Former Director Chris Paulene did not re-apply for a board position in the May 2023 election, said Nichols. Note: Two board director vacancies remain on the PPMD 1 board. Any eligible elector residing in PPMD 1 can apply for consideration for a board

position.
PPMD 1 2022 audit
Nichols requested the board accept the 2022 audit that was received in July from Hoelting & Company Inc. The board was provided with the management and internal control letters, and the financial statements. The audit was filed with the state by July 31, said Nichols.

The board unanimously accepted the 2022 audit as previously presented.

PPMD 1 financial statements
Nichols said the board had received the June financial statement for approval.

The board unanimously accepted the financial statements as presented for June.

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Meetings are usually held quarterly or when necessary, on the first Monday of the month at 4 p.m., via Telecon-

ference. Meeting notices are posted at least 24 hours in advance at <https://forestlakes-metrodistrict.com>. For general questions, contact District Manager Ann Nichols at 719-327-5810, anicholsduffy@aol.com. Natalie Barszcz can be reached at nataliebarszcz@ocn.me.

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Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, Aug. 14

General manager reviews water resources

By James Howald

At its meeting in August, The Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) heard a presentation from General Manager Jessie Shaffer explaining the approaches to water resources the district could use to plan future needs. The board considered awarding a construction contract, voted for a resolution affirming the district’s participation in the El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority (EPCRLWA) and launched an analysis of water and sewer tap fees. The board heard operational reports. Finally, the meeting ended with an executive session.

Four approaches to water resources

In response to a request from the board made at the previous meeting, Shaffer gave the board his thoughts on possible approaches the district could take to manage its present and future water sources with a focus on long-term sustainability.

If the district does nothing, Shaffer said, the Denver basin aquifers currently supplying customers will decline, with or without growth. More wells will need to be drilled and the cost of well drilling will escalate. The water pumped from aquifers will become more and more costly. Beyond a certain number of wells, it is hard to avoid well interference and it is harder to site wells, which can’t draw from outside the district boundaries. Long-term sustainability requires other sources, he said.

Shaffer characterized the next approach as “Go it alone”—by which he meant treating and transporting water from the Woodmoor Ranch without relying on any partnering water districts. This approach offers a sustainable supply of surface water, with the advantage that WWSD would retain complete control over its operations. The downside is affordability: The cost is likely to be near \$180 million, which would be born entirely by WWSD ratepayers. Shaffer said this approach is not achievable due to cost.

The third approach Shaffer discussed involves relying on Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) to convey, treat, and deliver water to WWSD customers. The short-term costs of this approach make it seem attractive, Shaffer said, but the long-term costs are higher than other alternatives, with a cumulative cost break-even point at nine years, and CSU could raise rates at any time so WWSD would lose control of its costs under this approach. Infrastructure to connect to CSU’s system would need to be built, and there are many fees that that would apply.

Finally, Shaffer discussed using a group approach and partnering with other districts. He said the EPCRLWA, in which WWSD is participating, is an example of this approach. A considerable challenge here is creating consensus among the partners, Shaffer said, but this approach offers economies of scale and sustainability.

Following the presentation, board President Brian Bush said the “do nothing” approach should be dropped as it violates WWSD’s mission to provide water to its customers on a sustainable basis.

Construction contract awarded

District Engineer Ariel Hacker told the board that the Monument Junction development currently under construction by Classic Homes has created a need for an additional pressure management zone within the district. The cost of building the new zone would primarily be paid by Classic Homes but some of the needed infrastructure would be installed beyond the boundaries of Classic Homes’ property to serve other WWSD customers, so WWSD would be responsible for a portion of the project. Classic Homes is responsible for installing a total of three pressure reducing valves and related pipelines, while WWSD is responsible for one valve and its pipelines, she said.

Hacker said three bids for the project were submitted but two contained substantial errors, so she recommended the third bidder, Asland Constructors.

Shaffer said that typically if a developer creates a need for additional infrastructure, the developer pays the associated costs, but in this case, since some of the work is off the developer’s property, Classic Homes approached the district and asked WWSD to manage the entire project, with Classic Homes paying WWSD for its portion of the project and adding a 20% contingency fee. Shaffer said if WWSD managed the entire project it would mean a single set of inspections, making the project more efficient.

The board voted unanimously to authorize awarding the contract to Asland Constructors. Bush asked that work not begin until Classic Homes had paid WWSD for its portion of the costs.

EPCRLWA resolution passes

The board voted unanimously in favor of a resolution formalizing WWSD’s participation in the EPCRLWA, informally known as the loop. Of the three other participating districts, Donala Water and Sanitation District has also signed a similar resolution and Cherokee Metropolitan District and the Town of Monument are expected to take the same step soon.

Tap fees due for review

Shaffer introduced Andrew Rheem of Raftelis, the company WWSD works with to model rates and fees and told the board he had asked Rheem last year to begin an analysis of the district’s tap fees.

Rheem said his goal was to ensure that growth in the district was paying its own way, explaining that there were some legal restraints on how tap fees would be used. For example, if they are used for debt service, the debt must be acquired due to development.

Rheem defined water and sewer tap fees as a one-time charge assessed to new customers when they

connect to the district’s infrastructure for the first time or when they increase their service. New customers are paying for their share of the district’s capacity, he said. Currently, a new residence in WWSD’s service area pays \$29,788 for a ¾-inch water tap and \$10,390 for a sewer tap. Larger capacity taps pay a higher fee, he said.

Rheem explained three approaches to setting tap fees. The “buy-in” method is often used in districts where capacity is available and a new customer is buying into the existing system. The system is valued at its replacement cost in this method. The “incremental” approach is used where the existing system has little or no capacity for growth and the tap fees will be used to increase capacity. Finally, the “hybrid” approach when there is current capacity, but more is needed.

Rheem said his analysis would evaluate the maximum water and sewer tap fees under all three approaches and would recommend tap fees for all meter sizes.

Bush asked what timeframe would be used for the analysis, and Rheem said that was an open question. Bush said the board should avoid getting locked into something it does not want going forward.

The board voted unanimously to authorize Bush to sign a service agreement with Raftelis to complete the study.

Highlights of operational reports

- Operations Superintendent Dan LaFontaine noted that the district’s customers were currently receiving surface water treated at the Central Water Treatment Facility.
- LaFontaine said he had been investigating how stormwater was infiltrating the system and said he believed that, due to the rainy weather, a number of customers were using sump pumps to drain their basements and sending that water into the wastewater system where it would be treated. This is an illegal discharge, he said, adding water from basements should be distributed to the homeowners’ property.

Executive session

The meeting ended with an executive session to confer with legal counsel on questions relating to the EPCRLWA and to negotiations with CSU regarding the conveyance, treatment, and delivery of water.

The next meeting is scheduled for Sept. 11 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, Aug. 8

Board hears request to merge with town’s Water Department

By Jackie Burhans and James Howald

At its August meeting, the Monument Sanitation District (MSD) board heard a summary of a meeting between two MSD board members and representatives of the Town of Monument to discuss merging MSD with the town’s Water Department. The board voted on updates to the district’s employee handbook and to its bylaws. In his manager’s report, District Manager Mark Parker discussed maintenance and security issues at the district’s headquarters. Board President Dan Hamilton led a discussion of improvements to the district’s billing system. The meeting ended with an executive session.

LaKind and Kronick propose merger

Hamilton told the board that he and Director John Howe met with Monument Mayor Mitch LaKind and Councilmember Laura Kronick to discuss the possibility of merging MSD with the town’s Water Department and ultimately creating a water and sewer authority that combines the MSD service area, which is not entirely within the town borders, with the town. Hamilton said no specific proposal was made. Howe recalled that a similar discussion had taken place when Don Wilson was mayor, but no proposal was made.

Hamilton said if a specific proposal were made, it would be the board’s duty to consider it.

Jim Kendrick, who handles operations for MSD, said he did not know of a merger between a special district and a charter town in the state of Colorado.

Employee handbook and bylaws updated

Hamilton presented changes to the district’s employee handbook, which has been under review by MSD’s lawyer to bring it into compliance with recent changes to state law. Most of the changes address Paid Time Off (PTO) policy, he said.

Hamilton said under the updated policy employees with one to five years employment would earn 160 hours of PTO per year, employees with six to 15 years would earn 240 hours, and employees with more than 15 years would earn 320 hours. Parker added that Colorado’s Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) law mandates that employees with less than a year on the job earn one hour of PTO for each 30 hours worked.

Hamilton proposed that each of Parker’s 28 years of experience in wastewater management add one-half a year of service to Parker’s 2 1/2 years of employment in MSD. He also pointed out that Colorado law requires any employee with less than 80 hours of earned PTO to be provided 80 hours if a public health emergency is declared.

Two half days off at Christmas and New Year’s were removed along with two floating days off and replaced with a day off following Christmas and New Year’s.

The board voted unanimously to approve the updated employee handbook.

The board also voted to approve amended bylaws. Parker said the changes were minimal, and he recommended reviewing the bylaws on a five-year schedule.

Manager’s report

Parker said the Black Forest Foods Café and Delicatessen, which rents a portion of the MSD headquarters building, was struggling with air conditioning issues and had deployed two swamp coolers on a temporary basis. He said its HVAC units were aging and would be evaluated for replacement. As the building’s owner, MSD would pay for any new equipment, he said.

Parker reported heat and hail damage to the roof on a section of the building and said a claim had been submitted to MSD’s insurer.

Parker told the board that Marylee Reisig, owner of Santa Fe Trail Jewelry, a tenant in the headquarters building, had thwarted a robbery attempt at her store. Pictures of thieves who had stolen \$5,000 worth of merchandise from the Garden of the Gods Trading Post had been circulated to similar retailers and Reisig recognized them when they entered her shop. Reisig was able to prevent any theft by kicking them out, and Parker called police. Security camera footage showed the thieves driving by the store, parking their car, and entering the store.

Improvements to billing proposed

Hamilton said he would like to see the district make its autopay option easier for customers. He proposed eliminating the fee for paying with a credit card. He said he was willing to increase rates to eliminate the fee. Parker said credit cards were accepted only online and he intended to make it possible to pay with a credit card in the office as well. Parker said he did not want the district to store customer information as that would require compliance with additional regulations. Account Administrator Cheran Allsup said some older customers prefer to pay in person.

Executive session

The meeting ended with an executive session to consider Allsup’s annual review.

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 Sept. 20. See <https://colorado.gov/msd>. For a district service map, see <https://colorado.gov/pacific/msd/district-map-0>. Information: 719-481-4886.

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

Donala Water and Sanitation District, Aug. 17

Electrical contract awarded

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

The Donala Water and Sanitation District (DWSD) board met in August to award a contract for electrical work on the district’s newest well. The board also heard operational reports from General Manager Jeff Hodge, who reviewed the district’s monthly finances and touched on several ongoing projects.

Well 16A nears completion

Hodge told the board that drilling and hardware installation are complete for Well 16A, which will pump

from the Arapahoe aquifer. Bids are out for drilling a pipeline to connect the well to the district’s infrastructure and to construct a vault for the well. The final bid is for electrical work, Hodge said.

Roger Sams, of GMS Engineering Inc., said the electrical work consisted of conduits, wiring, and installation of some equipment that has been received. There were two bids submitted for the work, Sams said: one from McDade-Woodcock Inc. for \$134,551 and a second from Sun Valley Contractors LLC for

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\$94,406. Sams advised the district to award the contract to Sun Valley Contractors.

The board voted unanimously to award the contract to Sun Valley Contractors.

Details of operational reports
Hodge told the board that water sales had increased during July, and much of the revenue lost due to exceptionally rainy May and June had been recovered. He gave a generally positive picture of the district's finances, remarking that electrical expenses budgeted at \$73,000 would be closer to \$50,000 due to the lower water usage in previous months. Repair and maintenance

was also under budget, he said.
Hodge said the district was rebidding the project to recoat the district's water tanks.
Commenting on the district's recent changes to billing for sewer service, which took effect in July, Hodge said only four calls from the district's 2,900 customers had been received, with two callers unhappy with the changes and two happy. Hodge said July billing for sewer service was up \$20,000.
Hodge said only 57 meters remained to be replaced out of the 2,819 in the district. He noted that the new meters were better integrated with the

district's billing software, allowing office staff to have accurate real-time data to assist customers.
Summarizing progress by the El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority, of which DWSD is a participating district, Hodge said he noticed Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) was becoming more flexible in the options it was willing to consider for how the loop project might use CSU's infrastructure. The loop might be able to save money by using some of CSU's infrastructure instead of building its own, he said.
Hodge also mentioned that due to staff changes, he was now the Operator in Responsible Charge (ORC) for

the Upper Monument Creek Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility.

The next meeting is scheduled for Sept. 21 at 1:30 p.m. Generally, board meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at 1:30 p.m. and include online access; call (719) 488-3603 or access www.donalawater.org to receive up-to-date meeting information. The district office is located at 15850 Holbein Drive, Colorado Springs.
James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me.
Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority, Aug. 17
Project manager discusses possible new approach

By James Howald
The El Paso County Loop Regional Water Authority (EPCRLWA) board met in August to hear an update from its recently hired Project Planning and Workflow Manager (PPWM) and to formalize the obligations required by the project's acceptance of American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The board also heard results from the most recent water quality tests. The meeting ended with an executive session.


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.

PPWM reports on meetings
The EPCRLWA board recently hired John Kuosman, a water practice leader with Merrick and Co., to serve as the project's PPWM, overseeing and coordinating the work of the various contractors contributing to the effort. Kuosman told the board he was developing a decision flow chart around types of funding, funding agreements, and plans to sell bonds. Kuosman said he met with Russ Dykstra of Spencer Fane, the project's law firm, to discuss the details of how the participating water districts might sell bonds to finance their portions of the project.


Kuosman also said he met with Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU). To date, EPCRLWA's proposed design for the project has not included use of any infrastructure belonging to CSU. Kuosman said CSU was open to the idea of "boutique rates" for the use of some of their infrastructure. He said CSU was not looking for a commitment, but wanted to have conversations with agencies that might be interested in such an arrangement. Kuosman suggested this could be advantageous for

EPCRLWA, which might be able to save costs on water treatment. Kuosman did not recommend that EPCRLWA "pump the brakes" on its current design, however.
Following Kuosman's remarks about the CSU meeting, Tom Tharnish, Monument's director of Public Works, who attended the meeting in place of Mike Foreman, Monument's town manager, moved to appoint Kuosman to represent the project at CSU's ongoing meetings regarding water reuse. The appointment was unanimously approved.
Kuosman also mentioned that he had met with the Town of Fountain, which has expressed interest in joining the project. Kuosman said Fountain did not want to pass on the costs of joining the project to its existing customers and was considering a public/private partnership instead that would be funded through new tap fees, which would be paid only by new development. The town had not made a formal request to join the project, he said.

ARPA subrecipient agreement explained
Dykstra asked the board to approve a subrecipient agreement required for the project to receive ARPA funds through El Paso County. The agreement states the funds must be used for work related to water and wastewater infrastructure that meets federal eligibility requirements, and the county will monitor the performance of the subrecipient against activities, goals, and performance standards that are defined for the project. The agreement documents that EPCRLWA has requested funds for:
• Design engineering fees
• Environmental assessments
• Easements and property repairs
• Legal expenses
• Indirect costs
The agreement also requires EPCRLWA to make all its accounting documents available to the county.
The board voted unanimously to approve the agreement.
Water quality tests proceed
Richard Hood of JVA Inc., the company EPCRLWA has hired to assess water



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quality and design the water treatment aspects of the project, told the board that the latest water quality data were in line with previous results. Two herbicides were detected for the first time, but the levels were below the maximum

contaminate levels for those chemicals.

Executive session and vote

The board adjourned the regular meeting and went into executive session to receive legal

advice on a water use offer. After the executive session, the board voted unanimously to authorize counsel to prepare a response letter to the water use offer. No details about the offer were provided.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Sept. 21 at 9 a.m. Regular meetings are usually held on the third Thursday of each month at 9 a.m. at the Monument Town Hall at 645 Beacon Lite Road. Workshop meetings are held every Thurs-

day at 9 a.m. at rotating venues. Please see loopwater.org or call 719-488-3603 to verify meeting times and locations. James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me.

Monument Town Council, Aug. 7

“Shoddy work,” says mayor, before voting “no” on change order

By Chris Jeub

One public Monument Town Council meeting took place in August which included two presentations, both underscoring the town’s dedication to preserving its heritage and enhancing its natural landscapes. An ordinance allowing a local health facility to host classes in its downtown studio was unanimously approved.

The mayor cast a dissenting vote coupled with stern admonition for a change order request by the director of Public Works.

The meeting also featured Monument’s police chief explaining the town’s support for Monument Academy’s School Resource Officer (SRO) which prompted concerns from one councilmember.

Mayor votes against “shoddy work”

Resolution No. 58-2023, concerning a change order for the Wagner Construction Contract for the new 2-million-gallon Tank Pipeline Project, spurred a thorough discussion within the Town Council. The resolution ultimately passed with a 6-1 majority, Mayor LaKind casting the sole dissenting vote. LaKind expressed dissatisfaction with the project’s progression.

During the exchange, LaKind questioned the project’s

timeline and challenged Director of Public Works Thomas Tharnish on the lay-down date of the fiber and sewer lines. Tharnish explained the complexities of the AT&T fiber line’s installation and the challenges it posed due to its unconventional placement. The discussion escalated as LaKind criticized the project’s engineering efforts, calling it “shoddy work,” citing multiple issues that had led to cost overruns. LaKind voiced frustration over what he perceived as insufficient engineer efforts and expressed his belief that the engineering firm, Forsgren Associates, should be financially accountable for the \$55,000 cost overrun.

Councilmembers engaged in a deliberation on the situation. Kronick raised questions about Palmer Lake’s cooperation, while King and Fiorito discussed the expense of the project and the necessity of proper bore work. The conversation pivoted to accountability, with LaKind urging Tharnish to take proactive measures to ensure that similar issues do not arise in the future. The mayor pressed for a commitment to avoid further cost overruns and to take necessary precautions to prevent reoccurrence.

In response, Director Tharnish pledged his best ef-

forts to prevent future incidents but acknowledged the absence of a fail-safe guarantee. Foreman intervened, proposing to take a proactive stance by ensuring a comprehensive re-evaluation of all factors involved. This commitment was aimed at assuring the council that due diligence would be exercised to prevent further financial implications. Even with this commitment, LaKind voted “no” for the change order, the only councilmember to do so.

Monument Cemetery and Northern Nature Center

John Howe and Michael Weinfeld presented an insightful history of the Monument Cemetery, uncovering more than anticipated. Initially envisioned as a several monthslong project, it took 13 years, resulting in a 73-page report. Among the revelations, 150 unknown Plaster of Paris gravestones were replaced by granite stones for an Eagle Scout project. Another 36 granite stones were made by the Public Works Department for the remaining unknown graves. Their research revealed discrepancies that were rectified for accuracy. Howe and Weinfeld advocated for the Public Works Department to continue maintaining the

headstones and proposed installing an informational kiosk for visitors.

Councilmember Steve King posed an intriguing question about the cemetery’s most prominent resident, prompting discussion about notables like “Freddy Krueger” and “Anna Frank,” interesting names but not the famous originals. Councilmember Laura Kronick praised the report, while Fiorito encouraged Howe and Weinfeld to collaborate with the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs’ History Journal for more exposure. The presentation garnered accolades and recognition for their volunteer work. See cemetery records photo and caption on page 20.

Todd Marts, executive director of the El Paso County Parks Department, introduced the Northern Nature Center project. The endeavor began with a feasibility study in 2019, culminating in a focus on Fox Run Regional Park. Marts emphasized community involvement in shaping the park’s development. The planned nature center, acting as a welcoming hub, will include a tower and canopy walk. Anchored in the mission to “connect and inspire stewards,” the center’s architecture reflects this intent. The project carries a price tag of \$12 million, with

fundraising set through 2024 and construction scheduled for 2025. Councilmembers raised questions about conservation easements, Native American history, and park security, receiving affirming responses from Marts.

Bloom Healing Arts approved for yoga studio

Ordinance No. 17-2023, an ordinance approving a conditional use for a yoga studio at 267 B N. Washington St., passed with a vote of 7-0. The ordinance sought approval for a recreation and entertainment, indoor use—a departure from its existing classification as a “clinic.” The applicant, Bloom Healing Arts, desired to extend its services by offering open yoga classes to the public, necessitating the reclassification and a conditional use permit.

The history behind the application traced back to the town directors’ initial permission for the location to function as a “clinic.” However, with aspirations to provide broader recreational opportunities to the community, the applicant sought a change in classification to accommodate their vision for a yoga studio. Town staff determined that the reclassification fulfilled all the requisite review criteria and, noteworthy, no new construction was anticipated. Moreover, staff recognized the yoga studio as being “generally consistent” with the Comprehensive Plan, further underscoring its alignment with the town’s broader developmental vision.

Terry Hayes, president and chief executive officer of the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce, expressed its support for this conditional use application, citing the significance of such an establishment for the town’s vibrant downtown area, calling it “a perfect addition” to the downtown landscape. Amid the discussions, Katrina Maldonado, owner of Bloom Healing Arts, extended gratitude to the town staff for its role in facilitating the process.







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MONUMENT (Cont. from 12)

to have officers in every school. Town Manager Mike Foreman noted that other District 38 schools were utilizing El Paso County SROs and wished to continue with that arrangement.

The annexation status of Monument schools was discussed, with Councilmember Marco Fiorito highlighting the distinction. Further inquiry arose about extending SRO coverage to St. Peter School, to which Regan expressed willingness, contingent on available resources. The conversation touched on the equitable

distribution of resources, with Kimple emphasizing the importance of fair treatment across schools.

The motion to approve the resolution was made by Fiorito and passed with unanimous agreement. However, Kimple reiterated his concern for equal treatment among all schools. The resolution’s approval reflected the Town Council’s support for providing SROs to Monument Academy, while ongoing discussions centered on the broader scope of SRO distribution among schools in District 38.

The second Town Council meeting originally set for Aug. 21 was cancelled to make time for a training session.

Monument Planning Commission, Aug. 9

Variance approved for affordable housing project

By Leslie Hanks

The Aug. 9 Monument Planning Commission meeting was attended by Commissioners Chair Martin Trujillo, Vice Chair Danny Ours, Cathy Green, Sean Zernikow, Ray Egley, Greg Collins, and Chad Smith.

The planning staff started the meeting by explaining that the planning commissioners acting as the Board of Adjustment was appropriate. According to the Home Rule Charter, the Board of Adjustment has five members and the Planning Commission has seven. The staff said this was consistent with the charter which states: “the responsibilities of the BOA are to be absorbed by the Planning Commission, since positions on the adjustment board are difficult to fill.”

The first order of business was a proposed variance for a Final Plat of a proposed affordable housing project at 245 Front St., which had been previously approved but because of a staff error, the required applicant signatures were not submitted in a timely fashion. Without the variance, the applicant would be

required to start the process over from the beginning.

This project is intended to provide affordable housing for community members. Several who testified, during public comment, that they were in favor of the variance mentioned Monument firefighters and first responders as those who might benefit the most.

Vice Chair Ours raised a question about language in the variance resolution, which implied that the applicant had somehow been at fault, when in fact it was determined that the planning staff had been in error. There was agreement that the resolution should be slightly reworded to properly reflect what had transpired and to clarify any potential confusion.

Planning Commission attorney Bob Cole had proposed that the applicant be required to sign a liability waiver, but community member Bonnie Hildebrandt asked the commission to support the variance without the liability waiver. Commissioner Green agreed that the variance should proceed without the

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 Tuesday, Sept. 5 (the day after Labor Day) and Monday, Sept. 18. 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.minute-sondemand.com> and click on Town Council.

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

liability waiver and suggested that the code should be revised so that this situation couldn’t happen again. She also raised concerns about whether the variance was the appropriate remedy for the situation.

Following the discussion about those technical issues, the Planning Commission passed the proposed variance unanimously, 7-0.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to several other code revisions where language clarifications should make applicant requirements clearer and assist staff in being as specific as possible to avoid confusion.

The next Planning Commission meeting will be held on Sept. 13 at Town Hall, 645 Beacon Lite Road. The agenda and packet can be found at <https://townof-monument.org>.

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

Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, Aug. 10, 16, and 24

Board extends permits and taps for former mayors’ property

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

In August, the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees held two regular meetings, on Aug. 10 and 24, each ending with an executive session. The Aug. 10 regular meeting was preceded by a one-hour board retreat to review rules and roles. The board met for a third executive session, online only, on Aug.16, to receive legal advice on a human resources complaint and a personnel matter involving the police chief.

The board considered a resolution permitting John Cressman and Nikki McDonald, both of whom have served terms as mayor, to extend the expiration of building permits and associated water taps for four lots they own jointly on Greeley Boulevard. Mayor Glant Havenar, who was involved in the sale of the lots, recused herself from the discussion and the vote on the resolution.

The board held a public hearing and voted on a resolution and an ordinance concerning a request to annex and rezone parcels of land belonging to James Parco and James Fitzgerald. The board passed an ordinance regulating recreational vehicle storage and usage and considered next steps on creating a water enterprise fund. Three permits for special events were granted. A masterplan for Centennial Park was approved and two commissioners were appointed to the Parks Commission.

Building permits and taps extended

A lengthy discussion preceded the board’s vote on Resolution 58-2023, which extends the building permits and associated water taps on four lots owned by Cressman and McDonald.

Town Administrator Dawn Collins summarized some of the background: Water taps had been issued for the lots, two of which have building permits in place, but a moratorium on land use applications had prevented the development planned by Cressman and McDonald. Now Cressman and McDonald want to sell the lots along with the associated building permits and water taps, she said. The resolution would authorize an agreement extending the building permits for one year, allowing the lots to be sold together or individually, along with the permits and taps.

Attorney Matthew Krob explained that people who own unused taps pay a monthly fee to support the water system even though the unused taps are not delivering any water. He said the municipal code was written to prevent people from buying water taps as an investment and from buying taps not associated with a specific lot.

Trustee Shana Ball pointed out that if someone were to purchase a water tap now, they would pay more than Cressman and McDonald paid.

Collins said that previously the town sold water taps for cash even though those sales were not in line with the municipal code.

Trustee Samantha Padgett argued the board was trying to create clear processes and that the processes in place when the taps were sold were not followed. She said she wanted to avoid the need for exceptions and the creation of new precedents. She suggested the taps should be considered abandoned so they could be resold by the town. Municipal code 13.08.060 says:



Above: At the Aug. 24 Palmer Lake Board of Trustees meeting, Cub Scout George Bartufiak, a third-grader at Larkspur Elementary School, led the Pledge of Allegiance that opened the meeting. Bartufiak attended with his mother and is in Larkspur-Monument Cub Scout Pack 217. The group met to fish at Palmer Lake on Sunday, Aug. 27. More information can be found on the pack’s Facebook page. Photo by Jackie Burhans.

“A water tap shall be deemed abandoned if a building permit utilizing the water tap has not been issued within one year from the date of purchase. If the building permit is allowed to lapse, the water tap shall also be deemed abandoned.”

McDonald pointed out that easement issues with CORE, the town’s power company, were preventing the plans for the lots from moving forward, and Cressman added that he had been paying the monthly fees for the unused taps since their purchase. He said he wanted to sell the lots and let the purchaser deal with the problems with CORE.

Following the discussion, the board voted unanimously in favor of the resolution to extend the building permits.

Cressman and McDonald appeared before a previous board on March 6, 2021 to discuss the lots and water taps. Details of that meeting can be found here: <https://www.ocn.me/v21n3.htm#plbot>.

Board approves parcel annexation and rezoning

The board held a public hearing and considered several items on the agenda to resolve a land use and property tax issue. First was an application to annex and rezone a parcel of land owned by James Parco, followed by a resolution on findings of fact and an ordinance to approve the request.

Parco explained that in 2012, he and his wife had purchased Lot 1 of a parcel of land in the Coldwater subdivision, where the Fitzgeralds had purchased Lot 2. One Lot was in the Town of Palmer Lake, and the other was in unincorporated El Paso County. Shortly after that, the Parcos and Fitzgeralds agreed to adjust the lot line between the two lots to improve access, swapping an equal amount of land. They had their properties surveyed, replatted, and filed documents by 2015. After that time, each property owner received two tax bills since they now each owned land in two jurisdictions. They later contacted the county assessor for advice on how to resolve the issue. Toward that end, Parco was now asking the town to annex and rezone his county property to incorporate it with his Palmer Lake land. Similarly, the Fitzgeralds would like their land disconnected from the town so they can incorporate it with the land they own in the county as one property. These actions would change the boundary line of Palmer Lake but not change its total property size.

Noting that the Palmer Lake Planning Commis-

sion had recommended approval of the annexation and rezone request on a vote of 7-0, Collins said that staff supports Resolution 60-2023 making findings of fact and Ordinance 18-2023 to annex and rezone Parco’s property as requested. The public hearing was closed with no comments, and the board voted unanimously to pass both the resolution and ordinance related to Parco’s request.

The last part of the solution would be to disconnect the Fitzgeralds’ land from Palmer Lake so they could incorporate it with their property in unincorporated El Paso County. The board directed the staff to draft the relevant resolution and ordinance and bring it back to the next board meeting.

Recreational vehicle storage ordinance passes

Completing a discussion begun in previous meetings, the board passed Ordinance 19-2023, which prohibits the storage or use of recreational vehicles on public property, with a 24-hour exception for loading and unloading, and sets parameters for the storage and use on private property that include 30 consecutive days of occupancy and prohibit connection to the sewer system.

The complete text of the ordinance can be found on the town’s web page here: <https://www.townof-palmerlake.com/ordinances/regulating-storage-and-use-rvs>.

Storm water enterprise fund next steps

At the Aug. 10 meeting, Ball made a motion requesting town staff to initiate an analysis of the steps needed to create an enterprise water fund. Collins and Krob will oversee the effort.

Special event permits approved

- The board approved special event permits for:
- The Lewis-Palmer Middle School Cross Country Meet, to be held on Sept.13.
 - A Melodrama Play to be put on by the Palmer Lake Arts Council on Oct. 6 and 8.
 - The Ninth Annual .5K Race, a fund-raising event for Awake Palmer Lake, to be held on Oct. 15.

Centennial Park master plan approved; commissioners appointed

At the Aug. 10 meeting, the board approved Resolution 52-2023, which approves the Parks Commission’s master plan for Centennial Park. Parks Commission Chair Reid Wiecks said the plan was an update of three previously developed plans. Trustee Kevin Dreher thanked Wiecks for his work on the plan.

At the Aug. 24 meeting, Kevin Magner and Jennifer Nilson were appointed to open seats on the Parks Commission.

Executive sessions

The Aug. 10 meeting ended with an executive session to determine negotiating positions relative to lease agreements and a possible annexation and to address the town administrator’s evaluation.

The virtual executive session held on Aug. 16 was for the purpose of receiving legal advice concerning a human resources complaint and a personnel matter involving the police chief.

The Aug. 24 meeting ended with an executive session to determine negotiating positions relative to lease agreements.

The next board meetings are scheduled for Sept. 14 and 28. 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.

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Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District, Aug. 16

Apparatus replacement plan revealed; chassis purchase approved

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Aug. 16 meeting of the Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD), the board approved the purchase of Ford F550 chassis for two brush trucks, and approved seeking a proposal from Pierce Manufacturing for the potential purchase of a Type 1 engine.

At the end of the meeting, resident Linda Smith announced that former volunteer Public Information Officer Gary Watson had recently passed.

Vice Chair Kiersten Tarvainen attended via Zoom. Note: This reporter attended via Zoom, but it was not possible to hear everything Hinton said throughout the meeting. Information was received via the board secretary and the administrative staff to make this article possible.

Apparatus replacement plan

Fire Chief PJ Langmaid said the department had a chance to purchase two Type 6 (brush trucks) F550 white truck chassis for \$66,647 each. There is no delivery date, but the district did “miss the boat” on purchasing chassis for the past two months, he said.

Chairman Nate Dowden said the district needed to send a commitment letter by Aug. 18 to avoid losing its place in line.

Langmaid said there is a slim chance the district could get a black or red chassis, but failing that, the plastic stripping would need to be removed from the interior of the white chassis before the department colors black over red could be applied. It will be more labor intensive, but better than nothing, he said.

Dowden said originally the Ford salespeople indicated good availability for red chassis and suggested the district reserve red, and when they were gone, the district was told it should have requested black, and now they are unavailable. The salespeople were not helpful, he said.

Treasurer Jack Hinton said he would need to look at the numbers before an informed decision could be made.

Langmaid said the 2023 budget approved \$65,000 for concrete, a capital improvement not acted upon, with no commitment to a contractor. The decision does not have to be based on where the money is coming from right now, he said.

Dowden requested the board approve the purchase of two chassis for a total of \$133,294.

Tarvainen said she liked the idea of the “F550 Crew Cab” model after picking and choosing what gear to take to calls in the past, she was all for it, she said.

The board unanimously approved the purchase.

Pierce Type 1 Engine proposal

Langmaid also requested the board review and consider a planning proposal to purchase a Pierce Type 1 Engine for about \$882,000. He said the purchase required no money down, with payments beginning in about two years, and if the economy does not allow the district to complete the purchase, it could be sold. Production time is typically two years or longer and costs continue to rise. The supply for this type of engine is dwindling and the configuration is never coming back, as the new EPA standards take effect. It will be a valuable commodity that other departments will want, he said.

Dowden said the board needs more data from Pierce Manufacturing and it could then consider approving a proposal in September.

Director James Abendschan recommended the department get on the list given the production timeline of two to three years.

Dowden requested the board approve that the fire chief proceed with a request for proposal to Pierce Manufacturing for a negotiation to purchase a Type 1 Engine for no more than \$882,000, for further consideration by the board.

Getting on the list is a good idea, said Tarvainen.

The board approved the decision to request a

proposal, 4-1, with Hinton dissenting.

Hinton expressed his disappointment with the method utilized to approve high-value purchases, stating that the board should be given more time beforehand to study information on the proposals and desired purchases. The board needs a clear definitive picture of what the financial status of the district will be before appropriating large sums of money, he said. More time was needed to study the proposals and take a more measured look at the financial situation and the future property tax assessments. It is disrespectful for the board to be bombarded with high-dollar requests for apparatus, he said.

Langmaid said he believed he was following the board directive to present information for consideration, and the board directed the staff to return with a proposal and pricing, he said.

Resident Smith asked if the district could conduct a search for a used engine. The district was successful last year and saved money by purchasing a used ladder truck in 2022, said Smith.

Langmaid said district mechanic Gavin Smith had looked for a Type 1 engine similar to the Pierce Type 1 Enforcer engine received last year, with just the following criteria: a 750-gallon water capacity, a 1,500-gallon-per-minute pump, and a low hose bed for firefighter safety, but nothing was available, he said.

Note: The board held a workshop at 5 p.m. before the meeting to discuss the apparatus replacement plan. The district purchased a Pierce Type 1 Enforcer engine in August 2022 via a 10-year lease-purchase agreement; and a tender truck that will cost \$346,910 is expected to arrive in fall. See www.ocn.me/v22n9.htm#bffrpd. The district also purchased a used 2005 mid-mount aerial ladder truck in late 2022 that once equipped will require additional staffing. See www.ocn.me/v23n7.htm#bffrpd.

Financial report

Hinton said the district had about \$4.1 million in total assets as of July 31.

The financial report provided to this reporter noted that as of July 31, the district had about \$2.4 million for General Operations. Deployment operations revenue received year to date was \$255,884, and 47.85% of the budgeted \$534,729 year to date. The income received year to date was about \$4 million, and 93.60% of the estimated \$4.2 million. Expenses year to date were about \$2.1 million, and 53.53% of the estimated \$4 million budgeted for 2023. The financial reports can be found at www.bffire.org.

The board unanimously accepted the financial report as presented.

Chief’s report

Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn said the department received about \$5,047 in ambulance revenue, and the total tax revenue was about \$79,108. A payment of \$43,879 was made toward the lease-purchase of the Type 1 engine purchase in 2022. The department also received uniform items and forcible entry props for the training center, she said.

Langmaid said the following:

- The training hours for June were off due to data entry issues, but July training racked up about 1,885 hours.
- The department training trailer is complete and in service.
- The department is advertising to hire a lateral entry level firefighter to ensure the board-approved minimum eight-a-day staffing model continues without forcing staff back on shift.
- Two firefighters completed Driver Operator Pumper certification in Alabama.
- The wildfire technicians assess the district fire danger and change the signs installed around the district. Signs may not need to change daily, but fuel moisture and weather are monitored for changes daily.

- No significant calls of unusual nature in July.

Training Complex upgraded

Langmaid said the Training Complex was undergoing an upgrade with the removal of the dead trees surrounding the facility, but to hide the junk cars and Conex containers from neighbors, dirt berms were being formed. He thanked La Foret Conference and Retreat Center for providing the excess dirt, and although it was a lot of work for firefighters, they moved the dirt and the complex should be more appealing to neighbors. The project was a “win-win” for everyone, said Langmaid.

The meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Meetings are usually held on the third Wednesday of the month at Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. Meetings are open to the public in person or via Zoom. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Sept. 20 at 7 p.m., and will begin with a Pension Board of Trustees meeting. 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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Monument Fire District, Aug. 23

Station 3 rebuild plans revealed; Station 5 remodel approved

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Monument Fire District (MFD) meeting on Sept. 23, the board received a presentation for the rebuild of Station 3, approved a contractor and funding for the Station 5 (Highway 83/Stagecoach Road) remodel, approved securing the production of two engines with a proposal for purchase, and held an executive session to discuss a land purchase agreement.

Secretary Jason Buckingham and Director Tom Tharmish attended via Zoom. Directors Randall Estes and Roger Lance were excused.

Station 3 future rebuild plans revealed

Fire Chief Andy Kovacs introduced Principal Lead Architect Kevin Schaffer and Associate Principal Architect Eric Becker of OZ Architects, and John Sattler, vice president of NV5 Program Management, representing the district during the Station 3 rebuild and the remodel projects for Stations 2, 4, and 5.

Becker and Schaffer gave a presentation on a preliminary design for Station 3, and said the following:

- The team conducted a feasibility study in 2022 and realized the existing site on Woodmoor Drive did not meet the district’s needs. See <https://www.ocn.me/v22n9.htm#mfd>.
- Three sites were selected within the district and the best location for the Station 3 rebuild was determined to be a site north and adjacent to the YMCA on Jackson Creek Parkway.

- The site is far enough away from Station 1 on Highway 105 and will include the district administration offices, and meet the needs of the growing community.
- The plan includes four apparatus bays, administration and living areas, bunk rooms, kitchen, a gym, combined workstation areas, apparatus support area, decontamination area, bathrooms, and a workshop.
- A training and community room function will be included, community accessible, but will remain separate from the fire crew.
- The site leaves some room for growth and expansion of the station and area, with the possibility of adding an additional bay.

Division Chief of Administrative/Fire Marshal Jamey Bumgarner said the original Station 3 on Woodmoor Drive was built in 1973.

Vice President John Hildebrandt asked if any lessons were learned from the remodel of Station 1 that was completed in fall 2021.

Kovacs said the Station 1 design lacks office space and wished that it had been included earlier in the project, but that has been addressed in the design for the Station 3 rebuild. Quiet space to allow study time for promotional or degree exams will be incorporated into the dorm areas, he said.

Note: The Station 1 remodel added 1,800 square feet



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BOCC (Cont. from 16)

at both the Planning Commission and BOCC hearings at that time. See www.ocn.me/v22n9.htm#epcpc and <https://ocn.me/v22n10.htm#epbocc>.

Black Forest minor subdivision requests

The commissioners approved two minor subdivision requests for Black Forest properties at the Aug. 1 meeting.

The first was a 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 property was rezoned from RR-5 to RR-2.5 by the BOCC in June 2023. See <https://ocn.me/v23n7.htm#epbocc>.

The second was a request by SMH Consultants for two single-family lots on a 27-acre portion of a 61.55-acre property. It is located at 18885 Brown Road, adjacent to the intersection of Brown Road and Running

Horse View, to the north of Walker Road.

The subdivision, zoned RR-5, will be known as Owl Ridge. One lot will be 22 acres and the other five acres. The existing single-family residence will remain.

Appointments to the Planning Commission

At their Aug. 15 meeting, the commissioners voted to reappoint Brandy Merriam and Bryce Schuettelpelz as associate members of the Planning Commission. Their terms run until Aug. 15 2024. Associate members may serve two consecutive one-year terms but can apply to serve additional terms if they wish.

Beacon Lite Road and Highway 105 projects

During August, the commissioners approved eight special warranty deeds, 13 temporary construction easement agreements, and two permanent easement agreements associated with the Beacon Lite Road/

County Line Road improvements project. The agreements are with various property owners for a total cost of \$274,130.

At their Aug. 1 meeting, the commissioners approved a special warranty deed and a temporary construction easement agreement associated with the Highway 105A project. The property is owned by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and comes at a cost of \$105,300.

Other decisions

- Aug. 1—the commissioners approved the issuance of three ambulance permits to Monument Fire District. The one-year permits run until July 31, 2024.
- Aug. 1—approved agreements between the county and Academy School District 20 and Lewis-Palmer School District 38 to provide school resource officers for the year to June 30, 2024.

HelenWalklett@ocn.me

El Paso County Planning Commission, Aug. 3

Flying Horse North draft service plan recommended for approval

By Helen Walklett

At the Aug. 3 El Paso County Planning Commission meeting, the commissioners reviewed the draft service plan for the proposed Flying Horse North (FHN) Metropolitan Districts Nos. 1-5 and voted 5-3 to recommend it for approval.

A revised sketch plan was approved in November 2022 for the 910-acre area that would be covered by the plan. See <https://www.ocn.me/v22n12.htm#epbocc>.

The service plan includes a maximum debt authorization of \$450 million, a debt service mill levy of 50 mills for commercial and residential property, and an operations and maintenance mill levy of 15 mills for a total maximum combined mill levy of 65 mills. Kari Parsons, senior planner, Planning and Community Development Department, said the statutory purposes of the district would be very standard and would include street improvements, the design, construction, and maintenance of drainage, sanitation, and recreation facilities, and covenant enforcement.

Parsons said a letter of opposition had been received. It came from FHN resident Phil Shechter who spoke against the FHN revised sketch plan at the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) land use meeting in November 2022 and raised concerns about possible impropriety during that hearing with the BOCC in February 2023. Parsons said the letter raised concerns about land use, density, the home valuations included in the financial plan prepared by DA Davidson & Co., and the sketch plan approval process. She clarified that this application would not consider the sketch plan, the land uses within it, the density nor the process by which it was approved by BOCC.

The financial plan is based on 900 single-family units with estimated values ranging from \$1.5 million to \$6.0 million per unit, a golf clubhouse, fitness center, and convention center with estimated values of \$400 to \$500 per square foot and annual sales of \$250 per square foot, and a 225-room hotel with estimated values of \$200,000 per room and an average daily room rate of \$500.

Attorney Russ Dykstra, partner, Spencer Fane, representing the applicants, said the residential development of about 844 acres would be located in

districts 2-4 with the commercial development being located in 1 and 5. He said full buildout was anticipated at the end of 2030. The purpose of the districts would be to provide for construction, installation, financing, ownership, and maintenance of public improvements. They would accommodate the need for phasing of development and allow for a coordinated approach to infrastructure financing. He said there were significant costs for development in the area and public improvement costs are estimated at \$39.35 million

Ahead of public comment Tom Bailey, chair, asked those who wanted to speak to limit their comments to the criteria. He said, “as Ms. Seago [Lori Seago, senior assistant county attorney] pointed out earlier, other questions about the approval of the sketch plan, the possible changes, anything else, the process that was used to get us where we are today, those are interesting but irrelevant. We can’t necessarily consider those things as we’re looking at these criteria for approval of this particular special district.”

Four members of the public spoke in opposition. No one spoke in support. One citizen said, “This type of debt and inflated housing is unsustainable.”

Terry Stokka, representing the Friends of Black Forest and the Black Forest Land Use Committee (BFLUC), commented, “While we understand a metro district is a logical thing to do for this, we’re not objecting to the metro district itself. We’re opposed to some elements of that plan because we believe that the costs are above reasonable. He continued, “We recommend that the service plan be returned to the applicant for some updates and some more realism.”

Amy Phillips, former chair, BFLUC, questioned whether the requirement that there be a demonstrated need for the services was being met. She said, “The existing residents do not need a hotel and do not want a hotel.”

Dykstra spoke again to clarify that the tax burden would only fall on new residents, saying, “This will not be on any existing residents out in Flying Horse North. This is just new residents.” He also clarified that the district would not be paying for the golf course or clubhouse which would be paid for with private funds. These facilities would be paying toward the debt service, however, and Dykstra pointed out

this would lower the tax burden for residents. It is not yet known whether the convention center will be a public or private facility. Existing FHN residents will have access to all the public facilities.

Commissioner Becky Fuller said she didn’t think the assumptions made sense. She asked what the absorption rate is for new or resale \$1.5 million homes in the county and was told about 75 per year.

Bailey said, “For me the assumptions made in the financial plan are reasonable. They’re not exact.”

Fuller said, “So when I’m looking at this, I do believe the first three criteria have been met. When we’re getting to item four where the financial ability to discharge the proposed indebtedness on a reasonable basis, we’re looking at 900 homes being absorbed in six years, which is about 150 a year over a million and a half in a market where we’ve seen 75 per year. I think that the underlying assumptions, they’re just not reasonable to me. For me, I think that it probably should be a different amount that they’re asking for.”

The vote to recommend for approval was 5-3. Commissioners Tim Trowbridge, Fuller, and Eric Moraes were the nay votes. Trowbridge said he agreed with Fuller and did not believe criteria 3 and 4 were met. Moraes commented, “I think a lot of the assumptions are a bridge too far to put faith in it at this point.”

Commissioner Christopher Whitney commented, “This is the second or third time since I’ve been here that I’ve felt like I need to vote aye because of what the statute and regulations require and, notwithstanding the fact that, on a moral basis, I’m not happy with it.” Describing the criteria as having been met “highly shakily with bullet form,” he added, “As the chair noted and as the testimony provided or the comments provided, we’re talking about a structure or a framework. We’re not talking about a plan that is written in blood and [which] everybody has to follow going forward so, for purposes of a structure or a framework, I’m okay with it but I expect it to change umpteen-nine times between now and when we finally finish.”

At the BOCC meeting on Aug. 29, the commissioners were expected to schedule the application to be heard at their Sept. 28 meeting. HelenWalklett@ocn.me

August Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

August was generally uneventful around the Palmer Divide, especially compared to the last few months where we had extremely active weather. Temperatures were slightly warmer than normal, and precipitation was slightly lower than normal.

The first half of the month saw the typical quiet morning, afternoon clouds, and scattered thunderstorms and rain shower pattern. This is the normal pattern, but something we hadn’t seen consistently so far this summer, because the typical North American Monsoon system has not been fully formed this year. This has been the result of various weather patterns across the United States that have been slow to change.

The pattern began to reflect more normal conditions later in July and into August. Of course, there was a major disruption early in the month with the remnants of Tropical Storm Hilary bringing record rainfall to many areas of Southern California, Arizona, and Nevada. Then right on its heels was Tropical Storm Harold, which moved into south Texas, up the Rio Grande basin and into the Four Corners. This added lots of moisture to the region and produced significant rainfall in western Colorado and the mountains. This was welcome in those areas, as they have been extremely dry all summer and

desperately needed the rainfall.

During the first two weeks of the month, most of us received 1-2 inches of rainfall, but no single day had any severe weather, just brief rain showers. Drier conditions took hold for the second half of the month and along with that, warmer conditions. Highs were consistently in the 80s from the 15th through the 24th. Temperatures peaked in the upper 80s on the 18th and 19th.

The first cold front of the season dropped temperatures by 20 degrees on the 25th and, when combined with low clouds and rain showers, definitely brought a feel of fall to the area. Temperatures stayed cool the next day before jumping back to the low 80s on the 27th. The end of the month saw a seesaw in temperatures with a few scattered showers mixed in as high temperatures varied between the low 70s and the mid-80s.

A look ahead

September is a transition month for the region, with the last tastes of summer mixed in with our first morning freezes. Leaves begin to change by the end of the month as well and in some years a little snow can happen. The overall weather pattern is generally one of tranquility, with our chances for thunderstorms dwindling and blizzard conditions not quite ready for prime time. We are often greeted with sunny, pleasant afternoons, with

highs from the mid-70s early in the month to the mid-60s later in the month. Our first sub-freezing low temperatures usually occur during the third week of the month, so prepare those tender plants.

August 2023 Weather Statistics

Average High	79.0° (-1.5)
100-year return frequency value	max 83.9° min 72.9°
Average Low	51.7° (+1.3)
100-year return frequency value	max 55.2° min 46.8°
Monthly Precipitation	1.30"
	(-1.60", 56% below normal)
100-year return frequency value	max 6.07" min 0.94"
Monthly Snowfall	0.0"
Highest Temperature	88° on the 16th, 18th, 19th
Lowest Temperature	46° on the 7th
Season to Date Snow	0.0"
	(the snow season is from July 1 to June 30)
Season to Date Precip.	21.51"
	(+3.45", 20% above normal)
	(Jan 1 to Dec 31)

Heating Degree Days 47 (-15)
Cooling Degree Days 56 (+12)
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 23.

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

“Disgusted” by MA’s gender rules

After reading the article regarding Monument Academy’s gender issues, I must say I am disgusted and appalled at the way this issue is being handled.

In the very beginning the simple solution would have been to have a boy, girl, and a third for those identifying differently. MA appears to single these students out, making it much harder for them, and at the same

time encouraging other students and staff to bully and discriminate.

Did anyone making these decisions stop to think that if a parent needs to be notified that it could devastating to the youth i.e.: being disowned or feeling unwanted or worse yet suicide, it happens every day. School should be a safe place, when sometimes home is not. I don’t see MA being that place.

Having a board member from another district spread conspiracy theories isn’t helpful; neither is legal counsel comparing himself to Moses or the Apostle Paul.

If MA wants to be totally non-secular, then perhaps it should become private and give up those federal dollars and property tax money.

For those of you that think being gay or transgender is a choice, I suggest you educate yourselves and your

child for most definitely it is not!

Claudia Swenson

Mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother

Preservation of historical Palmer Lake

Ever since the area that became the small town of Palmer Lake was discovered by pioneers in their westward expansion, Palmer Lake has been a part of Colorado history. The Chautauqua movement held a significant presence here for many years. The Salvation Army ran a summer camp here in Palmer Lake for many years, highlighted in both local and Denver newspapers. The property owners fell upon hard times. After multiple ownership changes, the land and the buildings were gifted to the Town of Palmer Lake to benefit the town and citizens. Now designated as the Elephant Rock Property

comprising 28 acres of land with buildings, including cabins, the debate has been ongoing for several years regarding what are the most beneficial uses of this land. After several rounds of discussions and developer presentations, the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees (PLBOT) have decided to award several acres and a couple of buildings to two developers, one to develop a wedding venue, the second for an eco-friendly spa. Contrary to the advice from several historical and arts organizations, the PLBOT wants to demolish all of

the remaining buildings and will not request grant monies from interested governmental departments to retain this historic legacy of Palmer Lake. The PLBOT will not reserve or allow the remaining buildings and cabins for use by future generations for artists-in-residence, local art programs, and as a community center. One of the developers even offered to do the preservation and restoration at no cost to the town. Although a portion of the property will be used to provide several new hiking trails, most of the remain-

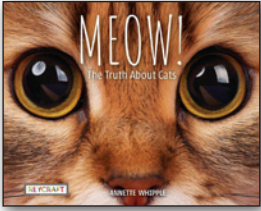
ing land will be unused, and the future of the remaining land is uncertain. A master planning committee of interested citizens was set up by the PLBOT but was dissolved with no explanation by the PLBOT after one session. As a result, part of the history of Palmer Lake and experience will be lost forever. I urge everyone to petition the PLBOT to save this piece of Palmer Lake history for its citizens, both present and future. Atis Jurka

Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

What animals teach us

By the staff at Covered Treasures
“Some people talk to animals. Not many listen though. That’s the problem.”—A.A. Milne
Here’s a sampling of books that provide information on the pets we love as well as the animals that live around us and what we can learn from them.

Meow! The Truth About Cats
By Annette Whipple (Reycraft Books) \$17.95
Why do cats have whiskers? How do cats land on their paws? Do people need cats? These and other questions are answered, along with some extra information provided by the cats themselves. Annette Whipple celebrates curiosity and inspires a sense of wonder while exciting readers about science and history.



Do You Know Where the Animals Live?: Discovering the Incredible Creatures All Around Us
By Peter Wohlleben (Greystone Kids) \$19.95
From the bestselling author of The Inner Life of Animals comes a book for kids about animals at home and around the world. Are worms afraid of the rain? Do fish use farts to communicate? Do animals dream? This visual, fun, and interactive book features at-home activities, facts, stories, and pictures.

The Cat’s Meow: How Cats Evolved from the Savanna to Your Sofa
By Jonathan B. Losos (Viking) \$28
Jonathan Losos, writing as both scientist and cat lover, explores how researchers today are unraveling the se-

crets of the cat using all the tools of modern technology, from GPS tracking and genomics to forensic archaeology. It gives us a cat’s-eye view of today’s habitats, including meeting wild cousins around the world whose habits your sweet house cat sometimes eerily parallel.

The Inner Life of Animals: Love, Grief, and Compassion—Surprising Observations of a Hidden World
By Peter Wohlleben (Greystone) \$22.95
Readers will discover the latest scientific research into animals’ emotions, feelings, intelligence, and how they interact with the world. We learn: Horses feel shame, deer grieve, goats discipline their kids, ravens call their friends by name, rats regret bad choices, and butterflies choose the very best places for their children to grow up. Animals are different from us in ways that amaze us—and they are much closer to us than we ever would have thought.

The Fur Person
By May Sarton (W.W. Norton) \$14.95
This enchanting story is drawn from the true adventures of Tom Jones, May Sarton’s cat. Before meeting Mary, Tom is a fiercely independent, nameless Cat About Town. Growing tired of his vagabond lifestyle, he concludes that there might be some appeal in giving up his freedom for a home. It is here that he becomes a genuine Fur Person. Sarton’s book is one of the most beloved stories about the joys and tribulations in sharing one’s life with a cat.

The Year of the Puppy: How Dogs Become Themselves
By Alexandra Horowitz (Viking) \$28
Dog researcher Alexandra Horowitz charts her puppy Quid’s growth from birth to first birthday. She docu-

ments social and cognitive milestones so many of us miss when caught up in the housetraining and behavioral training. Horowitz keeps a lens on the puppy’s point of view—how they begin to see and smell the world, make meaning of it, and become an individual personality.

The Stallion and His Peculiar Boy
By M.J. Evans (Dancing Horse Press) \$12.95
World War II is raging. Hitler is hiding away the world’s most beautiful purebred horses for use in experiments to create the perfect war horse. A peculiar boy, Teodor, becomes the groom for one of those special horses—Witez II, one of the most famous Arabian stallions of all time. Witez helps Teodor face his challenges and find his voice at a time when little is known about the condition now called autism. Inspired by a true story, this book blends the suspense of a World War II military rescue operation with the challenges of resettlement in a new land.

James Herriot’s Favorite Dog Stories
By James Herriot (St. Martins Press) \$25
After being out of print many years, it is now again available, filled with original watercolors that illustrate Herriot’s charming and wholesome tales. This classic includes an introduction from Herriot himself—the last piece of writing the beloved author and veterinarian ever completed. Follow the master veterinarian as he cares for dogs with his characteristic gentleness and peace, profound observation, and deep, loving humor.

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

Palmer Lake Historical Society, Aug. 12

Board, members pose as historical figures

By Marlene Brown
The Palmer Lake Historical Society (PLHS) board and members donned pioneer garb as members of the family and staff of the Reynolds Ranch at the Western Museum of Mining and Industry (WMMI) during Family History Day. See photo and caption of Family History Day on the right.
The cast of characters included Diane Kokes as Sarah Reynolds, wife of John Reynolds, owner of the ranch; Patricia Atkins as Miss Patricia, schoolmarm; Gary Atkins as ranch manager; Doris Baker as librarian and teacher; Barb Morehead, household manager; Jeannine Engel as Annie Judd, manager of the kitchen; and Heather Kruger, upstairs nanny of the children.
The Reynolds Ranch farmhouse has been restored by WMMI to its original Queen Anne design of the 1890s. The homestead includes the last-standing buildings of the town of Husted, a railroad town that was built in the 1870s between Monument and Colorado Springs and is now in the northern part of the Air Force Academy. Husted was a railroad stop and economy center with a post

office that was closed in 1920. The ranch supplied cattle and fresh milk and lumber processed at their sawmill. The Reynolds’s owned the farm until 1901.
PLHS continues to hold educational events to protect and provide access to historical items of significance relating to the Palmer Divide area, with many items on display at the Reynolds Ranch Family History Day. The Historical Society continues to display items at the Lucretia Vaile Museum at 66 Lower Glenway St in Palmer Lake. See palmerdividehistory.org/about-the-museum.
PLHS normally holds monthly meetings on the third Thursday of the month at the Palmer Lake Town Hall, at 42 Valley Crescent St, Palmer Lake, with several events during the year, including Father’s Day Ice Cream Social in June and Annual Yule Log Hunt in December. The next meeting is scheduled for Sept. 21 at 7 p.m., doors open at 6:30. John Spidell of the Spidell Foundation will present his “Trip to the Arctic.” For more information and to become involved in PLHS, go to palmerdividehistory.org.
Marlene Brown can be contacted at marlenebrown@ocn.me.



Above: Members of the Palmer Lake Historical Society dressed in historical garb are, from left, Wayne Russert, Barb Morehead, Heather Kruger, Kathie Lombardy Kauffer (hidden in rear), Doris Baker, Jeannine Engel, and Patricia and Gary Atkins. Photo provided by Palmer Lake Historical Society.

High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

Strategies for trees, especially in deer country

By Janet Sellers
What happens to trees in the fall
When the leaves change colors and fall in autumn, something amazing happens. Trees create sugars in their leaves, and in fall the sugars go down to the roots, and the tree saves that sugar energy to surge forth new growth in spring. Phloem cells of the tree transport the sugar for immediate growth, or the sugar is converted into starch stored in the trunk or roots. Bare root plants have that abundant stored energy and make a great comeback in spring—better than potted plants that get rootbound.
Deter deer with a fence hedge or “fedge”
Deer have a bad habit of getting into things and making bonsai out of our fruit and other trees, so a barrier is needed. A good deer fence is better with a hedge, known as a “fedge” to keep out sheep originally by tightly

weaving the live hedge plants, a kind of super espalier method. It is a beautiful and effective barrier. It may be that a dwarf variety could be easier to protect in the early stages, and they fit into more garden spots. In any case, protection strategies against deer are vital.
Deer can crawl under a fence, so a tight base is a must. Planting a hedge with the fruit trees may be a protection strategy as the fruit tree grows big enough to bear fruit, often four to five years after planting. Deer don’t see very well in terms of depth and avoid problems navigating the depth of a hedge with the height of a fence and likely will just go elsewhere. Many people in our area put up a barrier fence around each tree or around a few trees to deter deer.
We were deer proof for many years at the Monument Community Garden by planting giant sunflowers all around the garden fence because the deer couldn’t

see into the garden or find a clear place to jump. That strategy’s demise came when we lost our sunflower plants to late snow and ice three times last year. The poor sunflowers didn’t have a chance.
Crops to plant now outdoors or in pots
Mustard spinach (ready in just four weeks), carrots, beets, lettuce, and most cool-weather greens can start now and later with covered care (frost cloth, burlap, etc.) for possible random cold times. We can get crops even in October and November.
Janet Sellers is an avid “lazy gardener,” letting Mother Nature lead the way for natural landscapes that respect our Colorado high desert forest clime. Send handy tips to: JanetSellers@ocn.me..

Art Matters

Immersive art



By Janet Sellers
This summer season we’ve had a wide variety of art experiences to enjoy in our area. Our monthly Art Hop showcases available local art and artists and weekly concerts offered music at Fox Run Regional Park and Monument’s Limbach Park. The Palmer Lake Arts District has offered Shakespeare plays, sculptures, and art openings and classes.
We’ve had the images from the students of the Monumental Impact program digital artificial intelligence art show fundraiser at the Western Museum of Mining and Industry, along with our ever-present art sculpture parks and art walks along our Tri-Lakes Santa Fe Trail. We can always bring our visiting guests and families to these great, free events. Art Hop is also a seasonal chance to go into town and enjoy our galleries, artists, and the out-

door art fair atmosphere around town.
New on the art scene are immersive art experiences that are all the rage internationally, from enormous warehouses-turned-art-experience to small venues that engage visitors with much more because they are more personal and fun. The smaller venues offer art, of course. But the immersive experience fills the senses with sight, sound, and more. Standing back from the art wall is not as engaging as a space with artists’ live poetry and art projector images on the walls or people. Everyone experiences it in the present moment—there’s no time for photo-worthy social media because everybody is actively involved.
Immersion can include action painting by an artist, poetry reading, light shows, nature sounds, or music, and even audiences taking action. People can

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observe art in a new, creative way as an experience. Projecting images in video or stills around the room or on the people are also innovative ways to engage the visitors.

Different from performance art, video art, or installation art, an immersive art experience involves the rapport of the creative presenters and the live audience. It's using visual and other human senses

to share a creative and fun moment in time. People cannot get this on their own just by looking at static artworks or being in a theater. It is curated by the artists for the experience.

The immersive experience allows artists to lead with art and entertaining stories or poems. It is highly interactive and removes common limits to include multiple creative experiences in one go.

And it is not formal. It's more like a conversation of enjoyment of the art and visitors. People can stand and watch or interact as a mixed reality. Imagine the projected image or video on the people and you get the idea—the people become part of the art experience.

A special immersive event that includes art, light, and poems is planned at Bella Art and Frame Gallery for the sea-

son's last Art Hop Sept. 21. Local poets Mary Brown and me will read short flash poetry works (haiku and more) from our books, and artworks with immersive imagery from my books.

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

Snapshots of Our Community

August Issue Snapshot Correction: The Monument Sanitation District was founded in 1963 and is celebrating its 60th anniversary.

Hummingbird Festival, Aug. 4-5



Above: The annual Hummingbird Festival was held in a rustic setting off Roller Coaster Road in Monument on Aug. 4 and 5. Festival visitors could learn about hummingbirds, nature, and art. Vendor stands offered food, books related to Native American culture, alpacas, and others. A Monument fire truck displayed items related to fire and rescue. The festival is organized each year by Marlene Brown, Janet Sellers, and other local community leaders. *Photo by Steve Pate.*

Cemetery records updated, Aug. 7



Above and right: It was expected the project would take a few months. Instead, it took 13 years. On Aug. 7, the Monument Town Council heard a presentation from two Monument volunteers who updated the town's cemetery records. John Howe started the project in 2010. He was joined by Michael Weinfeld in 2018. They told the council how they used handwritten ledgers with information taken from family Bibles, minutes from various cemetery committees, and maps including one based on ground-penetrating radar which turned up many of the cemetery's 186 unknown graves. Howe and Weinfeld also made dozens of trips to the cemetery to photograph gravestones. They also used a pointed probe to uncover some markers that had sunk beneath the surface. If they heard a "thunk," they knew they'd hit a tombstone. The oldest marked grave is Alonzo Welty's. He was buried in 1860, 26 years before the cemetery was officially created. In all, there are 1,692 lots. All are spoken for. The cemetery sold out in April 2021. Howe and Weinfeld's findings are in a 73-page report called "A Loose History of Monument Cemetery." It can be found online in the packet for the Aug. 7 Town Council meeting at monumenttownco.documents-on-demand.com. *Photo by Steve Pate. Inset photo by Tia M. Mayer.*

AARP at the Black Forest Festival



Above: Members of Chapter 1100 of AARP in Black Forest provided pastries and cold water to people who attended the annual Black Forest Festival on Aug. 11. They also helped with the breakfast prepared by area Scouts. Chapter member Ray Rozak hooked up his tractor to a trailer and provided free hayrides. From left are Electa Beckner, Lin Rozak, Candace Lehmann, Bonnie Kittel, Ray Rozak, and Max Stucky. *Photo by Stan Beckner.*

National Night Out, Aug. 5



Above: A crowd of about 200 gathered for the annual National Neighborhood Night Out event on Aug. 5 at the Little Train Park in Promontory Pointe. The Homeowners Association board members hosted the picnic to thank first responders for providing a safe neighborhood. Participants were treated to Broken Bones BBQ, Lori Lynn's Cookies and Cream treats, a live performance by Nick Davey, a bounce castle, and interaction with officers and staff from Monument Police Department, El Paso County Sheriff's Office, and Monument Fire District Station 4. Pictured from left are Monument Police Department Cpl. R. Hoeh with Will Beatty, Melody Dixon, and Eva Beatty atop a Monument Police Department cruiser. *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*

AI art show, Aug. 11



Above and right: An exhibit featuring art created with artificial intelligence by students was on display at the Western Museum of Mining and Industry last month. The opening and a lecture were held on Aug. 11. All proceeds from the sale of the prints go to Monumental Impact, which enables and supports the growing talent and passion of high school students in technology, engineering, and entrepreneurship. The exhibit was a collaboration between the Palmer Lake Arts Council and Monumental Impact. It was made possible by a grant from CORE Electric Cooperative and was supervised by Dr. Kent Hutson. **Pictured in the inset** From left are Gavin Schmidt and Alex Epstein framing a print in preparation for the art exhibit. *Photos by Dr. Kent Hutson.*

Art Hop, Aug. 17

Right: The Art Hop was bustling in downtown Monument on Aug. 17 as artists demonstrated their art and offered finished pieces for sale. Artist Janet Sellers demonstrated watercolor at Bella Art and Frame, and there were outside booths of various artists. The last Art Hop of the 2023 season will be at 5 to 8 p.m. Sept. 21, free and open to the public. <https://tri.lakes.chamberof-commerce.me/Calendar/moreinfo.php?eventid=454703>. See more info at #downtownmonument. *Photo by Marlene Brown.*



Annual peach sale pick-up, Aug. 12



Above: Monument Hill Kiwanis members and volunteers distribute about 1,065 peaches to about 750 customers' vehicles at the Bear Creek Elementary School parking lot on Aug. 12. Dean Snow heralded about 40 volunteers to ensure the four-hour event ran smoothly, and Dan Lopez fed the crew with a barbecue picnic. All proceeds from the Annual Peach Sale are returned to the community through projects supported by the Monument Hill Kiwanis Club. For more information, visit <https://MHKiwanis.org>. **Pictured from left:** Joe Kneedler, Scott Ross, Paul Zmuda and Ted Bauman carry peaches to customers. *Photo by Kiwanis member Warren Gerig.*

WMMI Family Day, Aug. 12



Above: On Aug. 12, the Western Museum of Mining & Industry (WMMI) held its last of four family day events with this one focused on history. The museum staff offered hayrides and blacksmith demonstrations and operated several of its historic equipment including the EIMCO 630 rocker mucker. Visitors could also ride a soapbox racer provided by Pikes Peak Soap Box Derby. The Tenth Mountain Division-Living History Display Group Inc. had re-enactors in uniform representing different World War II combatants along with armament from pistols to machine guns. Information on upcoming WMMI events is at www.wmmi.org. Pictured: WMMI Family Day visitor Dillon Lott drove a Soap Box Derby racer. *Photo by David Futey.*

Fox Run Park concert, Aug. 24



Above: A beautiful summer evening was filled with the music of Colorado's own jazz band Dotsero (dotseroband.com) on Aug. 24 at Fox Run Regional Park, presented by El Paso County Recreation & Cultural Services. Concerts in the Park happen every Thursday through Sept. 7 at 6-8 p.m.. Scheduled to perform Sept. 7 is Wirewood Station. All concerts are free. For more information, see <https://communityservices.elpasoco.com/2023-el-paso-county-concerts-in-the-park/>. *Photo by Marlene Brown.*

Monument water tank, Aug. 21



Above: During the week of Monday, Aug. 21, painting was finished on the Town of Monument's (TOM) 2-million-gallon water storage tank. The tank construction site is located in residential Forest View Estates where all household properties are supplied by individual water wells separate from the TOM water system. During September, the excavation contractor will return soil initially excavated and stored off-site for backfill around the newly established tank. Backfill soil levels will reach within 3-4 feet of the top of the tank wall on the back side and will allow 13 feet of tank wall exposure on the roadside facade. Trenching and laying of the pipeline to provide water flow to and from the storage tank to downtown Monument continues along Highway 105. *Photo by Max Williams.*

Dusky Grouse sighted, Aug. 20



Left: On one of his many hikes in the Mount Herman area, Randy Phillips was able to take this photo of a dusky grouse. His comment was, "Mount Herman is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get. Several dusky grouse rudely walked in front of me." Phillips got this closeup on Aug. 20. *Photo by Randy Phillips*

Local labyrinth available

Right: A local couple has created a labyrinth in their yard that's been recognized by The Labyrinth Society, a worldwide organization dedicated to the preservation and education about the history of labyrinths. Bob and Jerusha Goebel built the labyrinth in Cherry Creek Crossing in 2009. The labyrinth is open to the public and is located at 3215 Doubletree Court. *Photo by Mike Pipkins.*



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.

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 workdays 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 workdays are scheduled on the second Tuesday of the month from April-October. Next meeting: Tue., **Sept. 9**, 5 pm. Meet at the Mt. Herman trailhead off Mt. Herman Rd and Nursery Rd and bring gloves. Tools will be provided.

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. For more information: www.flydenver.com/accessibility, www.hdsunflower.com/us/, and www.disabled-world.com/disability/types/invisible/.

Tri-Lakes Cares needs your support

Tri-Lakes Cares is the only food pantry and human services organization 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 learn 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 Mon.-Thu., 9 am-4 pm. For more information about Tri-Lakes Cares or how you can help, contact Tri-Lakes Cares at 719-481-4864 or info@tri-lakescares.org.

Senior Beat newsletter—subscribe for free

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

Can you volunteer today?

- **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://el-paso.extension.colostate.edu/volunteer-opportunities/>
- **El Paso County volunteer-based and nonprofit organizations** are committed to building healthy, caring communities and rely on the hard work of individuals like you. Reach out today and find out how you can play a part by becoming a volunteer in El Paso County. Get involved in El Paso County volunteering non-profits and organizations! <https://www.americanantowns.com/el-paso-county-co/volunteer-organizations/>.
- **The El Paso County Sheriff's Office** Volunteer Program is composed of a collective citizens group with a true and common desire to partner with the El Paso County Sheriff's Office by volunteering their services while learning more about the internal workings of the law enforcement community. <https://www.epcssheriff-soffice.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 Tues-

days 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.
- Monument Town Council meeting, Mon., Sep. 4, 18, 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.
- 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., Sep. 7, 21, 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/2023-meetings/>
- Tri-Lakes Wastewater Facility Joint Use Committee meeting, Tue., Sep. 12, 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., Sep. 12, 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), will meet Tue., Sep. 12, at the district admin building, 146 N. Jefferson St. Meets six times a year. Usually meets monthly on second Tue., 6-8 pm, Monument. For details, on the meeting site, see <https://www.lewis-palmer.org/Page/2#calendar>. Contact info: tmckee@lewispalmer.org.
- Palmer Lake Sanitation District board meeting, Wed., Sep. 13, 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., Sep. 13, 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.
- Monument Academy School Board, Thu., Sep. 14, 6:30 pm, East Campus gym, 4303 Pinehurst Circle. The MA board usually meets the second Thu. of the month. Info: 719-431-8001, www.monumentacademy.net/school-board
- Palmer Lake Board of Trustees meeting, Thu., Sep. 14, 28, 5 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent, Usually meets second and fourth Thu. Info: 719-481-2953. www.townofpalmerlake.com.
- Woodmoor Water & Sanitation District board meeting, Mon., Sep. 18, 1 pm (one- time date change), 1845 Woodmoor Dr., Monument. Normally meets second Mon. Info: 719-488-2525, www.woodmoorwater.com.
- Lewis-Palmer School District 38 board meeting, Mon., Sep. 18, 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/LPSDCCommunity, 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>.
- Monument Sanitation District board meeting, Wed., Sep. 20, 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., Sep. 20, 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., Sep. 20, 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., Sep. 20, 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., Sep. 21, 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., Sep. 21, 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., Sep. 21, 5:30 pm, 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302, Monument. Normally meets third Thu. Info: 719-488-6868, www.triviewmetro.com.
- Woodmoor Improvement Association Board Meeting, Wed., Sep. 27, 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, Monument Fire District board meeting, in person or via Zoom, Wed., Sep. 27, 6:30 pm., Station 1, 18650 Highway 105, Monument. Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining instructions at <http://www.monumentfire.org>, or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin, at 719-484-0911.
- Donald Vescott 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.monumenfire.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., Sep. 12, 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. Every second Wed., 1-2 pm. Free. Next meeting Sep. 13, guest speaker Crystal Maib on "the homeowners' reverse mortgage as available asset." 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@Home-scolorado.com
- Senior Social, fourth Wed., 12455 Black Forest Rd. Info: www.aarpchapter1100blackforest.weekly.com.
- Pikes Peak Genealogical Society meeting, Wed., Sep. 13, 6:30 pm, hangout begins, 7 pm meeting begins. Three Things You Need to Know About U.S. Census Records by Tamara Hallo. Normally meets the second Wed. of each month. 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.
- 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,

Fall Mountain Farm

Family Fun for Everyone!

Pumpkin Patch	Animal Village
Scavenger Hunt	Play Park
Hayrides	Giant Bouncers
Mazes	Pavilions
Farm Equipment	Corn Bins
	...and more!

**Volunteers Needed
for Fun Positions!
See website :)**



FallMountainFarm.com
16300 Mt Herman Lane
Monument, Colorado

See web site for dates & discounts

For children of any age
& adults who like fun!

- carlsonmkc@aol.com.
- Al-anon Meeting: Monument, every Thu., 7-8 pm, Ascent Church (formerly the Tri-Lakes Chapel), 1750 Deer Creek Rd., Monument. Info: MonumentSerenity@gmail.com.
 - Palmer Divide Quiltmakers, first Thu., 6:30-8:30 pm at Monument Chamber of Commerce building, 166 2nd St, Monument, CO.
 - Al-Anon meeting: Letting Go, every Thu., 9-10:15 am at Ascent Church, 1750 Deer Creek Rd., Monument. For additional information go to www.al-anon-co.org.
 - Networking breakfast, first and third Thu., Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce in person or via Zoom 166 2nd Street Monument 7:30-9 am free registration at www.TriLakeschamber.com.
 - Fuel Church Griefshare, every Thu., 5:30-7:30 pm 643 State Highway 105, Palmer Lake. Email info@fuel.org. 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake.
 - A.A. Big Book Study, every Thu., 7 pm, Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 W. Baptist Rd. Call 425-436-6200, access code 575176#.
 - Palmer Lake Historical Society, Thu., Sep. 21., 7 pm; (doors open at 6:30 pm), Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent St. Usually meets third Thu. 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, Fri., Sep. 15, 11:30 a.m. Falcon Club, USAFA. Guest speaker Terri Hayes, President and CEO of Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce. Program explains the expansion and development in the Tri-Lakes area with insights from Ms Hayes on the upcoming changes in our area. Usually meets 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., Sep.-June, various venues, 12 activity groups, i.e., hiking, bridge, etc. Guests welcome. For information contact Susan Owen, 719-886-7110.
 - 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., Oct. 5, 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 or (719) 488-3455.
- Benet Hill Monastery: Celebrate the Season of Creation, Fri., Sep. 1 to Wed., Oct. 4. See ad on page 3.
- Labor Day Weekend Art Festival, Sat.-Mon., Sep. 2-4, 10-5 pm, Free, Manitou Springs Memorial Park. Live music. Food. Free admission. Kids' activities. Info: www.commonwheel.com/festival.html
- The seventh annual Monu-Palooza music festival, Sun., Sep. 3, Limbach Park. Music 12:30 to 8:00 pm, six area bands, food trucks onsite. \$15 advance: Monupalooza2023.eventbrite.com (\$25 at the gate). Call/text (719) 649-0058 for info.
- Freedom School Of Martial Arts: Back to School Karate Special. See ads on pages 4, 6 & 19.
- Monument Hill Farmers Market, every Sat., 8 am-2 pm. 66 Jefferson Street Monument. See ad on page 5.
- Wraths Across America (WAA) invites all Americans to Wave the Flag on Tue., Sep. 12 to honor our US veterans and the fallen, the issues of 911 and those who protect our freedom, reminding all Americans of the responsibility and gratitude of our service people to our country. The non-profit WAA raises the US flag in their honor each and every Tuesday; its primary activity is distributing Veteran's wreaths for placement on graves in military cemeteries in December each year.
- Kiwanis Fundraiser for Heart of Monument Play Park (HoMPP), a park for all ages and abilities. Thu. Sep. 14, 5-9 pm. Indicate you want to support the HoMPP or Kiwanis and 20% of sales go to the park.
- 100+ Women Who Care: Social Gathering, membership drive. Wed., Sep. 20, 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. Free. Learn how you can make a big impact without a big commitment. Find out about the group and how we help the community - bring a friend! We want to see you socially so you'll understand the impacts to our communities allowing us to give \$20K annually to local charities. Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr., Woodmoor.
- YMCA 5K race series: Creepy crawl, Turkey trot, Jingle jog. Early bird pricing ends Sep. 15. See ad on page 6.
- Run4Hope 5K for Schools, Sat. Sep. 16. 9 a.m., Ascent Church 1750 Deer Creek Rd., Monument. competitive 5K run and 2-mile color-fun run/walk to celebrate HOPE and HEALING in our community! The event raises money to support the social and emotional wellness of our youth through various programs in local area schools focusing on suicide prevention - along with mental health awareness and suicide prevention training in El Paso County. Chip-timed for competitors, 2-mile color fun run/walk (500 pounds of color!), pancake breakfast, games, music, vendors, and more. Register at <https://run4hope5kforschools.com/>.
- Art Hop, Thu., Sep. 21, 5-8 pm. Last Art Hop of 2023! 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.
- Art Hop - Immersive art and poetry event! Thu., Sep. 21, 5-8 pm Local poets and artists Mary Brown, Janet Sellers read from their upbeat short poems: micro poems haiku, ekphrasis with paintings, etc. On the hour at Bella Art and Frame Gallery, 251 Front St.
- Covered Treasures Bookstore, Thu., Sep. 21, 5-8, authors Hugh and Urling Kingery sign Birding Colorado: Where, How and When to Spot Birds Across the State; DeeDee Lake signs her Rules of Engagement series. Sat., Sept, 23, 1-3 pm, author Jessica Speer signs The

- Phone Book: Stay Safe, Be Smart, and Make the World Better with the Powerful Device in Your Hand. 105 Second Street, Monument.
- Fox Run Regional Park Lights Fest, Fri., Sep. 22, 4:30-8:30pm; decorate and launch water lanterns, light parade, roast marshmallows, hot chocolate, doggy-light-costume contest, an evening of beautiful lights, music, food trucks, and special moments. <https://communityservices.elpasoco.com/september-fest/>
 - 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
 - Little Log Church will hold a Service in the Park, Sun., Sep. 24, Palmer Lake Pavilion, east side of the lake. Worship, singing and Bible teaching beginning at 10:09 a.m. with a potluck picnic following. Please join us. Contact: littlelogchurch.com or call 719-481-2409.
 - Eagle Wine and Spirits Charity Whiskey Live and Silent Auction, Thu., Sep. 28, 5:30-8 pm, Margarita at Pine Creek, 7350 Pine Creek Rd., Colorado Springs, CO 80919. Proceeds will benefit WhollyKicks. \$75 per person includes buffet dinner and drink. For more information sales@eaglewineandspirits.com or visit whollykicks.org
 - 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@monumentimpact.org. 55 Adams St in Downtown Monument. Monumental Impact info/register: <https://monumentimpact.org>.
 - St Peter Catholic School, now enrolling preschool to 8th grade, www.PetertheRocksSchool.org See ad on page 2.
 - A Time to Dance: Dance classes for everyone. See ad on page 4.
 - Affordable Flooring Connection, special offers. See ad on page 2.
 - Cornerstone Cleaners, special offers through Sep. 30. 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 Sep. 30. Baptist Road next to King Soopers. See ad on page 3.
 - Gleneagle Candle Co., special offers through Sep. 30. 13796 Gleneagle Drive 80921. See ad on page 4.
 - Monument Cleaners, special offers through Sep. 30, 15932 Jackson Creek Pkwy., in Monument Marketplace. See ad on page 5.
 - Monumental Med Spa, Announcing a new location, 88 Hwy 105. See ad on page 11.
 - MVEA Member appreciation day, Wed., Oct. 11. Lunch, pie, more: 11 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. At the Falcon office 11140 East Woodman Road 80831. See ad on page 16.
 - Noel Relief Centers, new patient specials. 950 Baptist Rd #130, Monument. See ad on page 7.
 - The Living Room Plants, special offers through Sep. 30, 12229 Voyager Pkwy, Suite 100. See ad on page 5.
 - Tri-lakes Dynamic Rotary International Club presents first annual golf ball drop, Sat., Sep. 30, 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. Santa Fe baseball field, 99 Santa Fe Avenue Monument. See ad on page 3
 - The Vanity Box, special offers, facial revivals, and more. See ad on page 3.
 - Tri-Lakes Collision and Auto Service Center, special offers through Sep. 30. 2101 Wolf Court, Monument. www.trilakescollision.com. See ad on page 5.
 - Miner's pumpkin patch, every Sat. in Oct. Western Museum of Mining and Industry. See ad on page 9.
 - Take a Kid Mountain Biking Day, Sat., Oct. 7, 9 am; trail riding etiquette handouts, riding clinics, giveaways.. This is a terrific way to get kids outside and develop their mountain biking skills. All ages tots to teens, just need a working bike and helmet to participate. Info:communityservices.elpasoco.com/take-kid-mountain-biking/
 - Empty bowls dinner and silent auction, fundraiser for Tri-Lakes Cares: Wed. Oct. 4, 5-7:30 p.m. See ad on page 7.
 - PTSD: What You See, Feel, Do About it, Sun., Oct. 8, 1-3 p.m. Do you know someone with Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)? Does it impact family, friends, you? Speaker: Jim Cunningham, LPC, a 24-year Air Force veteran and professional counselor, will conduct this 2-hour session including a presentation and open discussion on PTSD which is open to our congregation and community. Family of Christ Lutheran Church Youth Center (West Entrance) 675 Baptist Rd. Hosted by FOC Stephen Ministry.
 - Front Range Maker's Market: Sat.-Sun., Oct. 28 - 29. Lewis Palmer High School, Sat. 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Sun. 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. \$5 at the door. See ad on page 24.

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.

- International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day. Annual community and worldwide event Sat., Nov. 18. Speaker, kids panel, adults panel and discussion, refreshments, more. Woodman Valley Chapel. Details: www.woodmenvalley.org or contact Saucedo 719-488-8280
 - Book signing by Lisa Hatfield, Sat., Nov. 25. Covered Treasures bookstore. See ad on page 5.
- Our community calendar carries listings on a space-available basis for Tri-Lakes events that are sponsored by local governmental entities and not-for-profit organizations. We include events that are open to the general public and are not religious or self-promotional in nature. If space is available, complimentary calendar listings are included, when requested, for events advertised in the current issue. To have your event listed at no charge in Our Community Calendar, please 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, Oct. 7

Ad space reservations due: Fri., Sep. 15
Finished ad artwork due: Fri., Sep. 22
Letters to the editor due: Fri., Sep. 22
Calendar items due: Fri., Sep. 29

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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Event information: calendar@ocn.me

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