

# Our Community News

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



PRSRT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
MONUMENT, CO  
PERMIT NO. 32

\*\*ECRWSS\*\*  
Postal  
Customer

Issue #275 — Volume 24 Number 2 — Saturday, February 3, 2024

Free

Visit [OCN.ME](http://OCN.ME)  
on the web.  
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 18-19 for event locations and other details of these and many other local events.

- OCN mailing days, Thu., Feb. 29 & Apr. 4, approx. 9 am-noon.
- Tri-Lakes Senior Center Age Strong workshops: Fri., Feb. 9 & 16
- Winter fun at Fox Run Regional Park, Sat., Feb. 10, 10-2 pm
- Kiwanis Stars of Tomorrow application deadline Sat., Feb. 10
- Palmer Lake Historical Society Meeting, Thu. Feb. 15, 7 pm; (doors open at 6:30 pm).
- Ham radio technician license 20 hour course, introductory session in person Sat., Feb. 17, 1-3 p.m.
- D38 K-12 Chess Tournament, 17th annual free event Sat. Feb. 24, 8:15 a.m.
- MVEA student scholarships application deadline Wed., Feb. 28
- The Love Shop: Restyle Your Furs, Wed.-Thu., Mar. 13-14. See ad on page 8.



**Above and below:** Fireworks brightened the dark sky to mark the start of the Palmer Lake Outdoor Classic high school hockey tournament. See page 16. *Photos by Michael Weinfeld.*



## In this issue

County News 1-2

Palmer Lake News 1, 3-6

Monument News 1, 6

D38 News 7-10

Fire District News 10, 12

Water & San District News 12-14

NEPCO News 14

Weather 14

Letters and Columns 15-16

Snapshots 16-17

Notices and Calendar 18-19

OCN Information 17, 19-20

## Circulation

Print Run: 23,450  
Mail Delivery: 22,734  
Stacks: 746

## Broomball on Palmer Lake, Jan. 20



**Above:** Two rinks on frozen Palmer Lake were used for the annual Broomball Tournament on Jan. 20. One rink was for adults, the other for children and families. Broomball is like hockey except you use brooms instead of sticks and balls instead of pucks. The tournament isn't supposed to be taken very seriously. In fact, it's advertised by the Palmer Lake Parks and Trails Commission as "good old-fashioned buffoonery" for "the world's okayest broomball players." All proceeds went to the maintenance and improvement of trails in Palmer Lake. *Photo by Michael Weinfeld.* See page 16 for information on the Palmer Lake Outdoor Classic hockey match held on Palmer Lake two weeks earlier.

Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, Jan. 11 and 25

## Ben Lomand annexation considered; TLCA closed to the public

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans  
At its meeting on Jan. 25, the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees (PLBOT) held a public hearing to consider three land use issues. Of the three, the eligibility of the Ben Lomand property owned by the United Congregational Church for annexation by the town was the most contentious. At the same meeting the board continued its discussion of the conditional use permit it had granted to The Movement Church to use the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA) building as a church.

The board also addressed a request to vacate a town right of way (ROW) on Petite Avenue. After some discussion, the board tabled a resolution concerning the memo of understanding (MOU) with Awake the Lake (ATL) regarding the proposed pickleball courts. The policy for public comments was also updated at this meeting.

At the board's first meeting of 2024, held on Jan. 11, the board held a public hearing on a conditional use permit for a new business. It also voted on several resolutions appointing volunteers to commissions and boards.

Both meetings ended with executive sessions.

### Board assesses eligibility for annexation

Mayor Pro Tem Dennis Stern opened the public hearing to consider a petition from the United Congregational Church to the town requesting annexation of 181.5 acres of land the church owns. The land in question is south of County Line Road, west of Indi Drive, and north of Capella Drive and is currently part of unincorporated El Paso County. The land is part of a larger property owned by the church, 163 acres of which are already part of the town. Stern said the applicant for annexation would speak first and then the public could comment. After public comments, the applicant would make a closing statement. Stern stressed the hearing was to assess eligibility only and other issues would be addressed later in the process.

Dan Madison, a civil engineer with Manheart Consulting, represented the

**PALMER LAKE (Cont. on 3)**

Monument Town Council, Jan. 2 and 16

## "It's hard to do business here," developers claim before moratorium approval

By Chris Jeub

The Monument Town Council (MTC) convened for its first meeting of the year on Jan. 2, addressing various topics including the ArtSites Program, new ordinances, a major Planned Unit Development (PUD) amendment, and property tax mill levy scenarios. The second meeting commenced on Jan. 16 with a contentious debate with developers over a proposed moratorium on new applications for development, a moratorium that passed unanimously.

### ArtSites program presentation

Madeline VanDenHoek from the ArtSites Committee presented an update on the town's ArtSites program. The

program, managed by Parks and Trails Planner and Program Manager Cassie Olgren, currently boasts 25 sites with 14 rotating sculptures, six permanent sculptures, and five murals. VanDenHoek highlighted the program's growth in 2023, with an increased budget of \$19,760 for 2024. The town aims to expand the program further and is seeking additional committees to contribute to its development.

Residents can explore the ArtSites using the Otocast app. More information can be found on the town's website at [www.townofmonument.org/582/ArtSites](http://www.townofmonument.org/582/ArtSites).

**MONUMENT (Cont. on 6)**

BOCC, Jan. 9, 23, 25

## Palmer Lake annexation discussed

By Helen Walklett

During January, the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) considered an annexation notification from the Town of Palmer Lake. The commissioners also adopted the 2024 budget and reappointed their chair and vice chair for a second year.

### Ben Lomand Mountain Village annexation

Notification of an annexation request from the Town of Palmer Lake was received by the commissioners at their Jan. 23 meeting. The BOCC cannot approve or deny an annexation report; it serves to notify it of the annexation request and sets out potential impacts in general terms.

The Ben Lomand Mountain Village annexation concerns 181.5 acres of RR-5-zoned land south of County Line Road, west of Indi Drive, north of the Lakeview Heights subdivision, and east of Oakdale Drive. The request to annex the land into the town is being made by the United Congregational Church and was scheduled to be heard at the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees meeting on Jan. 25. Meggan Herington, executive director, Planning and Community Development, told the commissioners that she expected the request to be continued to a later date after an hour of testimony as required by statute. See the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees meeting article at left.

The applicant's intend to develop the proposed 181.5 acres along with an additional 163 acres within Palmer Lake and rezone the land to the RE Estate Zone, which allows single-family dwellings on a minimum lot size of 2.5 acres. All existing structures, including the church and youth center, would remain. The county thought the development might number 80 or so houses.

The commissioners heard that the town had not yet provided a full Annexation Impact Report and had initially requested a waiver for this from the BOCC but had later said the information would be provided. The commissioners voted unanimously to decline the waiver, meaning the matter will return to the BOCC at a later date

**BOCC (Cont. on 2)**



**BOCC (Cont. from 1)**

in the interest of full transparency. The commissioners noted that the application was a major matter for Palmer Lake and directed county staff to continue to work with the town on it. Commissioner Longinos Gonzalez said his first feedback would be that he would like to see the town accept the maintenance of certain county roads and maintain access to Ben Lomand Mountain.

The matter is ongoing.

**2024 budget adopted**

At the Jan. 9 meeting, the commissioners voted unanimously to adopt and appropriate the \$491.6 million 2024 budget. Its adoption normally takes place in December, but it was postponed due to the special legislative session that took place at the state assembly.

Commissioner Gonzalez said, “I think this budget really addresses the needs of the community and [is] a great prioritization of public safety, roads.” Commissioner Stan VanderWerf said, “I appreciate calling it the recession-proof budget because we’re not 100% sure where 2024 is going to go and we have held reserve dollars in this budget in case we have an economic downturn.”

The commissioners went on to certify the 2023 mill levy for property taxes

payable in 2024. Nikki Simmons, chief financial officer, said the mill levy of 7.192 mills was significantly lower than the overall authorized mill levy of 8.46 mills due to the TABOR cap. It represents an almost 17% reduction in the county’s portion of property tax bills.

Commissioner Carrie Geitner commented, “TABOR is the hero here. I’m happy for us to pass this but I would never want to lose sight of the fact that when the entire state was scrambling and trying to figure out what to do about these increases, regardless there was always a plan in El Paso County for the El Paso-specific taxes and that’s because TABOR always does its job of limiting government growth in this situation.”

**Chair and vice chair reappointed**

Also at the Jan. 9 BOCC meeting, the commissioners voted 4-1 to reappoint Commissioner Cami Bremer as chair and Commissioner Carrie Geitner as vice chair. Commissioner Gonzalez, who had put himself forward as a candidate for the position of chair, was the nay vote.

**Hill subdivision approved**

At the Jan. 25 BOCC land use meeting, the commissioners approved an application to subdivide a Black Forest property into three residential lots. The application came to the BOCC with a recommendation for approval from the Planning Commission. See the El Paso County Planning Commission article below.

**Other decisions**

- Jan. 9—the commissioners approved the issuance of an ambulance permit to Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District dba Monument Fire District. The six-month permit runs until June 1, 2024.

\*\*\*\*\*

The BOCC meets weekly, and the next meeting will be at 9 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 6. The commissioners will also meet on Feb. 8 and 22 at 9 a.m. to consider land use items.

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

**FRINGE BENEFITS CUSTOM INTERIORS, LLC**  
**(719) 339-4219**  
*Energy-Efficient Blinds  
Custom Draperies  
Remodels  
Paint Consults*  
***fringebenefits.houzzsite.com***



Mary Sue Hafey  
Interior Designer  
licensed/insured  
Monument, CO

**Security Cameras**

- What's Happening While You're Away?
- THEFT • VANDALISM • TRESPASS
- PEACE OF MIND • CHILD WATCH



Family Owned Since 1977  
(719) 495-2715    [www.BFHSS.com](http://www.BFHSS.com)



Dave Easley, Owner

**Black Forest Home Security Systems**

**Catholic Classical Education**  
Forming the whole child with truth and virtue.



**ST. PETER**  
CATHOLIC SCHOOL  
Preschool - 8<sup>th</sup> grade  
719-481-1855

ACADEMICS • ATHLETICS • FAITH FORMATION

[petertherockschool.org](http://petertherockschool.org)

*El Paso County Planning Commission, Jan. 4 and 18*

**Black Forest subdivision recommended for approval**

By Helen Walklett

The El Paso County Planning Commission (EPCPC) met twice during January and considered a minor subdivision application for a Black Forest property.

**Hill minor subdivision**

At the first EPCPC meeting of the year, the commissioners voted unanimously to recommend for approval a subdivision request for a Black Forest property.

The application by Douglas and Katherine Hill would see the 14.69-acre property, east of Black Forest Road and south of Hodgen Road, subdivided into three residential lots. All three lots would have access to Black Forest Road via the existing driveway which would be re-dedicated as a private road named Alpaca Heights. Because Black Forest Road is classified as a section line road, properties with frontage onto it are permitted to have a minimum lot size of 4.75 acres. The property currently has a residential home, garage, and horse stable on it, and these would remain on the proposed lot 1.


The request was heard as a consent item, meaning there was no discussion, and was then heard at the El Paso Board of County Commissioners land use meeting on Jan. 25. See BOCC article on page 1.


**Highway 83 access plan**

The commissioners were scheduled to adopt the Highway 83 Access Control Plan at the Jan. 18 meeting. However, this was moved to the March 7 meeting at the request of staff. Details of the plan were presented to staff at the Dec. 7 meeting. See [https://www.ocn.me/v24n1.htm?zoom\\_highlight=acp](https://www.ocn.me/v24n1.htm?zoom_highlight=acp)

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

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

**Kiwanis**  
Monument Hill Club



Open Meetings Saturdays, 146 N. Jefferson — 8:00am

**STARS OF TOMORROW TALENT COMPETITION**

Stars of Tomorrow is a professionally-judged, performing arts talent show for students living in the boundaries of or attend L-P D 38 grades 1 – 12.

**Application, Fee & Audition Rules**

Participants must live within Lewis-Palmer School District D-38 borders or attend school in D-38.

Application deadline: Received by February 10, 2024, \$10 per act (checks made payable to Monument Hill Kiwanis Club).

Use the QR code below or go to: [www.monumenthillkiwanis.org](http://www.monumenthillkiwanis.org) to apply online or download an application.

Auditions – Saturday, February 24, 2024

Rehearsals – Saturday, March 16, 2024

Show – Sunday, March 17, 2024

Notification of inclusion in auditions will be sent to all applicants by February 19, 2024.

Auditioners will be notified by March 1<sup>st</sup> whether they will be performing.

**Auditions are competitive! Come prepared as show-ready.**


You will be rated on: Talent, Technique & Artistry, Presentation, Stage Presence & Selection of Material

**Prizes**

Elementary (1-5) - \$500

Middle School (6-8) - \$750 1<sup>st</sup>, \$500 2<sup>nd</sup>

High School (9-12) - \$2,000 1<sup>st</sup>, \$1,000 2<sup>nd</sup>, \$500 3<sup>rd</sup>



*We Love Our Volunteers!*

Their hard work and dedication makes a huge difference in the lives of local seniors and we couldn't do it without them.

Want to give back to your community? Scan the QR code to learn about volunteering!



Visit [silverkey.org](http://silverkey.org) or call our Silver Line at (719) 884-2300



**Affordable**  
**TF**  
**Flooring**  
**Connection**

*Sweet Deals!*  


Next to Pikes Peak Brewing    **719-481-0831**  
1752 Lake Woodmoor Drive Monument, Colorado 80132

**Carpet • Wood • Tile • Vinyl**  
**Sales and Installation**  
[www.affordableflooringconnection.com](http://www.affordableflooringconnection.com)



**PALMER LAKE**  
*(Cont. from 1)*

church. His petition, included in the packet for the meeting, argued the property was eligible for annexation because:

- More than 1/6th of the perimeter is contiguous to the town.
- There is a community of interest with the town.
- The land is rural and capable of being integrated with the town.
- The annexation will not change any school district.
- The land will not be divided without the consent of the owner.

Scott Krob, the town attorney, said the annexation process has three steps:

- Filing a petition with a map, which has been done.
- A determination of eligibility.
- The annexation itself,

which must be consented to by both sides.

Krob said the public hearing was part of the second step in the annexation process. He reviewed the criteria for eligibility detailed in the church's petition.

Krob explained the consideration of eligibility would not be completed at the board meeting because the town was required to write an annexation impact report examining water, sewer, and electrical service, among other issues,

and to submit that report to the county. The report was in progress and would go to the county in a few days, he said.

Krob said the public hearing would remain open until

POLE BUILDINGS ★ GARAGES ★ SHOPS ★ BARNs ★ COMMERCIAL



**STEEL STRUCTURES AMERICA**  
INC.

NORTHWEST'S LARGEST, MOST EXPERIENCED  
**POLE BUILDING CONTRACTOR**

**FINANCING AVAILABLE**

CALL US TODAY  
**719-631-2019**

FOR QUALIFIED CREDIT



**WWW.STEELSTRUCTURESAMERICA.COM**

*The Vanity Box*

*Hair*  
Cuts-Color-Style  
Shaves  
Mani | Pedi



*Skin*  
Facials-Waxing  
Chemical Peels  
Microdermabrasion

**HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY**

*Gift Certificates Available*

RaeAnne Soles - 719-761-1468  
Esthetician & Certified Essential Oils Practitioner  
(719) 481-1763 (salon) or (719) 761-1468 (cell)  
West End Center - 755 Highway 105, Suite C & P  
Palmer Lake, Colorado 80133

**Game City**  
BUY - SELL - TRADE

VIDEO GAMES, SYSTEMS,  
ACCESSORIES & DVDS

All generations  
of gaming  
Cash for old games  
Find us on Facebook

Open:  
Tues - Fri 10am-6pm  
Sat 10am-5pm

481 W HWY 105 Unit 209  
Monument, CO 80132  
719-487-9995

**GAMECITYCO.COM**

Turn your focus to  
2024 and visualize the  
possibilities

"With a wealth of expertise in full-service travel planning-including air travel, cruises, bespoke vacations, and tours- I craft specialized & seamless travel itineraries for my clients."

Trust a Local to Travel Better  
Global Vacations & Local Getaways



Cynthia Bickerstaff  
Luxury Travel Advisor  
Monument, CO

Call Me Direct: 602-652-2034  
cynthia.bickerstaff@protravelinc.com

[www.virtuoso.com/advisor/cyntbick91243](http://www.virtuoso.com/advisor/cyntbick91243) GLOBAL TRAVEL COLLECTION

Gleneagle Candle Co.  
13786 GLENEAGLE DR.  
COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80921

**VALENTINE'S DAY**

**BUY 2 GET 1 FREE ON EVERYTHING!\***  
**PLUS RECEIVE AN EXTRA 10% OFF WITH THIS AD.**

\*8201F VALID FROM 2/5/2024 - 2/14/2024. 10% OFF VALID FROM 2/5/2024 - 2/29/2024. BUY 2 GET 1 FREE APPLIES TO REGULAR PRICED PRODUCT ONLY. EQUAL OR LESSER VALUE ITEM WILL BE DISCOUNTED AS FREE ITEM. OFFER CAN NOT BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHER OFFERS OR ON CLEARANCE.

**INSIDE & OUT**  
**PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

- 30+ Years' Experience
- Home Maintenance and Repairs
- Honey-Do Lists
- Home Inspection
- Inspection Repairs
- Deck Repairs

**Happy Valentine's Day!**

**John Lisle 732.904.4483**  
**johnlisle9@gmail.com**  
**www.homeinspector-COS.com**

**TURBO'S RV SERVICE**



**Quality RV Repair!**  
**(719) 487-9119**  
**service@turbosrv.com**


Awnings, Appliances, Electrical,  
Solar, LP, Plumbing, Satellites, AV,  
Hydronic, Batteries, Hydraulics,  
Roofs, Trailer Brakes & Lighting,  
and more...

*Celebrating over  
20 years of service!*

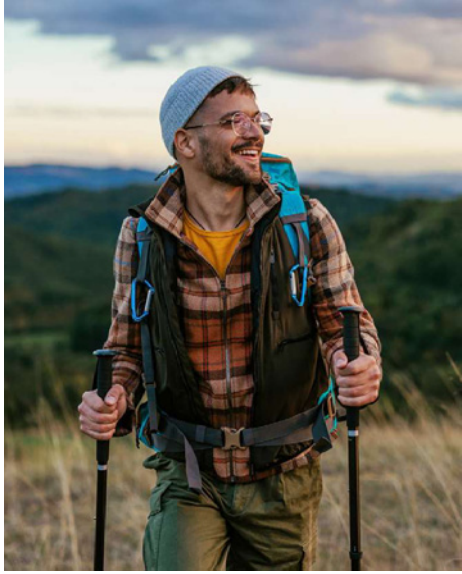
**Edward Jones**  
> [edwardjones.com](http://edwardjones.com) | Member SIPC

Have questions about withdrawing funds, converting your account or generating income?

Gain experienced guidance while ensuring your retirement accounts are following your investment strategy. Contact me today, and let's make sure you're still on the right track.



**Brad A Lundberg, CFP®, AAMS®**  
Financial Advisor  
16055 Old Forest Pt Suite 100  
Monument, CO 80132  
719-481-0043



IRT-43951-A AECSPAD 21068926



**Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery**

**Connect with us**

Let us pray with you

Walk in the forest

Visit prayer sites

**Attend Sunday worship, 10:15 am**

A Contemporary Benedictine Monastic Presence  
3190 Benet Lane, Colorado Springs, CO 80921  
(719) 633-0655  
**www.benethillmonastery.org**

**YOUR FAVORITE BEER, WINE & LIQUOR:**

**10% OFF** WITH THIS COUPON



**EAGLE**  
Wine & Spirits

- ★ Amazing selection of local craft beers
- ★ Rare, hard-to-find whiskey & tequila
- ★ More than 1,000 different bottles of wine
- ★ Tastings & special events most Fridays
- ★ Helpful, knowledgeable staff

Conveniently located in the Jackson Creek Crossing shopping center on the north side of Baptist Rd.  
**www.eaglewineandspirit.com ★ (719) 481-0708**

Excludes: items already on sale, kegs & tobacco products. Expires 2/29/24. • OCN



**"Solutions for Your Wildlife Worries"**

Skunks • Squirrels  
Raccoons • Bats  
Snakes • Gophers  
Woodpeckers • Swallows  
Pigeons • Foxes  
Mice.....& More!

Humane Animal Removal & Prevention Repairs

Let Us "Kritter" Proof Your Home

**100% green company**

Locally Owned & Family Operated

**www.k2kritttersolutions.com**  
**719-358-1856**



Feb. 2, allowing the county time to review the impact report.

Stern opened the public comment portion of the hearing. Resident Roger Mosely said the hearing did not meet requirements because the county had only had 22 days' notice, not the 25 days required by statute. He went on to argue the property was not eligible for annexation because the town's master plan was inadequate, the impact report had not been submitted, and the area to be annexed must be urban.

Resident Martha Brodzik said the town needed to consider the financial impact of annexation. Johan Moum said he was afraid the developer would change the nature of the development at some later time. Krob said issues of zoning could not be considered until after the annexation was complete.

Meggan Herington, the county Planning and Community Development director, said the Board of County Commissioners had received notice of the proposed annexation in early January and had asked her to tell the town what should be included in the impact report. She said she had sent the town a letter and asked that traffic and drainage studies be done, and that protection of Ben Lomand and existing trails should be considered. She said the commissioners would schedule a meeting quickly after receiving the impact report.

Residents made comments including:

- That fire prevention costs be considered.
- That residents should have input into the annexation impact report.
- That the town would be better stewards than the county.
- That the proposed development might lead to current residents needing to redrill their wells.
- That 5-acre lots would be better than the 2.5-acre lots the Palmer Lake Planning Commission had approved.
- That the presence of Native American artifacts in the land to be annexed should be considered.
- That the draft of the annexation agreement had issues about the compliance of accessory dwelling units with code.

Trustee Jessica Farr said the discussion about annexation had been going on for years and if the land was not annexed the town would still be obligated to provide police and fire service to any residents due to the principal of mutual aid, but all tax revenue would go to the county, so the town would not be reimbursed.

Trustee Shana Ball said she supported the annexation because it gave the town control.

In his closing statement, Madison said he believed the eligibility requirements had been met and residents' concerns would be addressed in the later steps of the development process. He said traffic, water availability, drainage, and environmental concerns would be handled in due course, and that the applicant had no intention to change the project as it proceeded through the development process.

Later in the meeting, the board voted to wait until its next meeting on Feb. 8 to vote on Resolution 13-2024, which would determine the Ben Lomand property's eligibility for annexation.

## Board closes TLCA to public

At the Jan. 25 meeting, Town Administrator Dawn Collins reviewed the background of the conditional use permit granted to The Movement Church to use the TLCA building as a church.

At its Dec. 14 meeting, the board granted The Movement Church a conditional use permit to use the TLCA building for church services. The Planning Commission had previously approved that use on a three-to-two vote with the requirement to complete inspections by the Fire Department and Pikes Peak Regional Building Department (PPRBD) and to resolve any violations. Collins said the PPRBD can't complete its inspection without accurate plans, and the plans submitted included residential living accommodations. Residential living was never approved for the building. In addition, the fire inspection was incomplete because the fire chief had not been allowed access to some parts of the building.

Collins said the Fire Department had concluded the building was not safe and should not be open to the public, the town staff believed no one should be living there and she asked the board for guidance.

Fire Chief John Vincent said the only Certificate of Occupancy (CO) he could find was out of date and was approved in 1999 when the building was a garage. He said he had been asking the owner of the building for information since 2021 without any response and had been denied access to some of the building during his inspection. He recommended closure until the required information was provided.

John Cressman, speaking on behalf of The Movement Church, asked for more time to resolve outstanding issues. He said he had presented plans he had received from TLCA at a recent virtual meeting with town staff. The church was working hard to fix problems and many buildings had changed without updating their CO, Cressman said. In response to a question from Stern, Cressman said he did not know when accurate plans would be available.

Ball said she wanted to support the work that was being done but she had a concern about inadequate egress if there is a fire.

Krob summed up the situation by saying the building had no CO and a recommendation from the fire chief that it should be closed. The town could be liable. Krob recommended the town follow the recommendation of the fire chief.

Trustee Samantha Padgett made a motion to close the TLCA building to the public until the current issues were rectified. Krob clarified that the owner would need to obtain a CO and pass a fire inspection. The motion to close the building passed, with Trustees Ball, Nick Erhardt, and Padgett voting in favor and Stern and Trustee Jessica Farr voting no. Trustee Kevin Dreher and Mayor Glant Havenar were absent from the meeting.

## Request for vacation of ROW denied

During the public hearing at the Jan. 25 meeting, the board considered a request to vacate a town ROW on Petite Avenue. In his application to vacate, resident Brad Akers asked the town to eliminate Petite Avenue completely and to change the address of his house to an address on Verano Avenue. His application argued Petite Avenue is too steep to ever be developed as a road.

At the hearing, Akers said he thought his request complied with the town's master plan.

Jim Brinkman, a surveyor working for David Sanchez, who owns property adjacent to Akers', opposed the vacation until all options for access to Sanchez's property were investigated. Claudia Beltran, another of Akers' neighbors, spoke in favor of the vacation.

Collins pointed out the Planning Commission had voted against approval of the vacation. Krob said the town was under no obligation to give up the right of way and said the town should consider if the right of way could be of use in the future. A vacation would mean the town's property would be gone forever.

The board voted unanimously to deny the request to vacate.

## Liability issue complicates MOU

Krob told the board that the MOU between the town and ATL would need to address the liability questions

**ALTERATIONS SPECIALIST**  
On-Site Tailoring 

**10% OFF**  
**ALTERATIONS**

Must present coupon at time of drop-off. Prepayment required. Cannot be combined with other offers. Expires 2/29/24.

**CORNER C STONE** **487-0268**  
1030 W. Baptist Road  
By King Soopers  
M-F 7:30 am - 7 pm  
Sat. 8 am - 4 pm

  
**FIRESIDESWEEPS**  
CHIMNEY CLEANING + REPAIR  
WOODBURNING + GAS FIREPLACES  
**CLEANING  
REPAIRS  
INSPECTIONS  
SERVICING**  
303-246-9573  
www.firesidesweepsco.com

**PIKES PEAK PROPERTIES** **Our listings sell!**

**Sold!**  
6111 Meadowbank LN, Colorado Springs  
\$485,000. MLS: 4208813

**Pending!**  
8375 Talc DR, Colorado Springs  
\$499,900. MLS: 4410959

**Pending!**  
2576 Pony Tracks DR, Colorado Springs  
\$439,000. MLS: 8074500

Tanya Bingham, Cassidy Jones, Darrell Wass, Kelly Gehrman, Kristin Dionne, Thomas Hoang, and Frances Sikich

**RE/MAX ADVANTAGE**  
**719.822.1444**  
Each RE/MAX Brokerage Business is Independently Owned & Operated

**YOU-OLOGY**  
*Life Coaching*  
**Laura Westbrook, Life Coach**  
251 Front Street, Suite 3, Monument  
**Individual or Group Sessions Available**  
Specialties: Grief Journeys, Mid-life Transitions, Body Image, Anxiety, Grey Divorce, Fulfillment  
**Info & Scheduling: YouologyLC.com or 303.868.6906**

*Monument Dental Arts*  
"We practice minimally invasive techniques using the highest quality materials to insure healthy, esthetic teeth for the life of our patients." - Dr. Tony George  
1880 Willow Park Way Suite 101, Monument  
(719) 488-8880 • www.monumentdentalarts.com

**BBB BOOKKEEPING**  
BY BOBBI, INC.  
**(719) 488-2308**  
**Complete Bookkeeping & Payroll Services**  
bookkeeping@bobbid.com  
**Quick Books Training and Setup IRS Clean-Up**

**KAREN BUTCHER**  
**Independent Insurance Agent**  
**Your One-Stop Shop in 50 States**  
With over 23 years of experience, I would love to help you with all of your insurance needs for Auto, Home, Umbrella, Life, RVs, Motorcycles, and more.  
Call or text: (719) 221-1339  
karen@westcoins.com **WestCo Insurance**

**Daytime Dance Classes**  
A Time To Dance  
Home school friendly!  
Tuesday  
Musical Theatre Dance, 2:00-3:00  
Lyrical/Worship Dance, 3:00-4:00  
Hip Hop, 3:15-4:15  
Thursday  
Ballet, Tumbling, and Poms, 11:00-12:00  
Friday  
Tap, 4:00-5:00  
All classes are for ages 6+  
A Time To Dance Colorado.com

WE'RE COMMITTED TO FINDING THE RIGHT HOME THAT FITS YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR LIFESTYLE.

**REALTY ONE GROUP APEX**

KERRI KILGORE OWEN DAVIES

15 SPECTRUM LOOP SUITE 115, CO SPRINGS | 719.960.6699 | © 4.9 ★★★★★ | @ f



arising from the presence of a town water line under the pickleball courts that ATL proposed to build. The MOU drafted by the town staff asks ATL to provide \$20,000 to be placed in the Water Fund to cover the costs of any repairs needed to the water line. Collins said the intent was to release ATL from any further liability if repairs were needed in the future.

Farr and Ball questioned whether \$20,000 was enough to cover potential repairs, and Ehrhardt asked for some insight into the amount from an engineer.

Stern proposed tabling the MOU discussion so that more information could be gathered, and the board voted to do so.

#### Public comment policy updated

Krob related to the board an incident at a board meeting in Wheat Ridge when a participant in a virtual meeting, using an assumed name, made a series of antisemitic and racist public comments. That prompted Krob to update Palmer Lake's policy on public comments to prevent a similar misuse of the public comment portion of board meetings by adding that comments on items not on the agenda must be made in person or by email 24 hours before the meeting.

The town's policy on public comments includes:

- A speaker must be recognized by the mayor before speaking and should state their name and address for the record.
- Comments must be addressed to the board as a whole and not to individual staff members.
- Each speaker is limited to three minutes and can only speak once per agenda item.
- The mayor has the discretion to limit the time or number of speakers on an agenda item and can require a speaker to leave the meeting if they do not observe decorum.
- The mayor may call for a recess if lack of decorum interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting.

The complete policy can be found in the board packet here: <https://mccmeetings.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/palmerlake-pubu/MEET-Packet-a147a276f-a7549728d977d0b2e8cb86d.pdf>.


Mosely objected to the three-minute limit on

public comments. Stern pointed out that the mayor had discretion to permit longer comments if necessary.

The board voted unanimously in favor of Resolution 12-2024, which adopts the updated policy.

#### Conditional use granted for Slap Shot Hockey

At the Jan. 11 meeting, a public hearing was held on a request from Nicole Tahmindjis for a conditional use



**Rock House Ice Cream, Candy & More**  
24 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake 80133 • 719-488-6917



**TRI-LAKES COLLISION AND AUTO SERVICE CENTER**

- Alignment
- AC
- Brakes
- Oil Change
- Struts
- And More

**10% OFF**  
Any service of \$250 or more.  
Mention this ad when you book your appointment.  
Good through 2/29/24.

**719-495-4508**  
2101 Wolf Court, Monument, CO 80132  
[www.trilakescollision.com](http://www.trilakescollision.com)

Serving Colorado for 15 years!

**AIS**  
**MEDICARE & MORE**  
— COLORADO SPRINGS —

**WHAT WE DO**

- ✓ Provide education on Medicare and all plan options
- ✓ Lifetime Claims and Billing Support
- ✓ Excellent customer service
- ✓ Local Support

**ELIZABETH BRYSON**  
**INSURANCE GROUP**

**CONTACT US**  
Elizabeth Bryson  
Licensed Insurance Broker  
719-418-9350  
Elizabeth@EBInsuranceGroup.com

**Located:**  
325 2nd Street #M  
Monument, CO 80132

We do not offer every plan available in your area. Any information we provide is limited to those plans we do offer in your area. Please contact Medicare.gov or 1-800-MEDICARE to get information on all of your options.

in a C2 zone. Tahmindjis said she intended to open Slap Shot Hockey Lanes at 870-872 Highway 105. The business would provide a location for hockey players

*Decor by Diane*  
**Interior Painting**  
No job too small. Over 30 years experience.  
[Decorbydm@aol.com](mailto:Decorbydm@aol.com) or (719) 491-6852

*Speedtrap Bistro*

84 Highway 105 in beautiful Palmer Lake, Colorado  
**open 8 a.m. - 2 p.m. every day**  
Breakfast, Lunch, Pastries, Coffee  
Liquor, Merchandise, Fine Art

*a cozy gathering place for nice people*

[www.speedtrapbistro.com](http://www.speedtrapbistro.com) • [speedtrapgo@gmail.com](mailto:speedtrapgo@gmail.com) • 719.488.2007

**FIREWOOD SALE!**  
**Call for details!**  
We deliver it to you!  
Bundled firewood available.  
Dependable and courteous service!  
[www.sharpestcut.com/firewood.html](http://www.sharpestcut.com/firewood.html)  
**Sharpest Cut 719-491-4811**

**Find Your Freedom**  
with Splankna: A Spirit,  
Soul, Body Approach to  
Holistic Healing

Learn more at:  
[www.flourishingfaithministry.com](http://www.flourishingfaithministry.com)

Shannon Lebakken, M.A.  
[flourishingfaithministry@gmail.com](mailto:flourishingfaithministry@gmail.com)  
(704) 699-6058

*flourishing faith*  
ministry

Scan for website

**"Microsoft will stop supporting Windows 10 on Oct. 14, 2025. Are you ready? There are ways to upgrade your software without upgrading your hardware. Give us a call to find out how."**

**THE COMPUTER SURGEON**  
Garry Greenspan  
Computer and Technology Specialist

3070 Doolittle Road  
Monument, CO 80132  
[garryg@compsurgeon.com](mailto:garryg@compsurgeon.com)

719-357-8393  
Fax - 866-884-5815

**15% OFF!**  
with this ad. Good through February 29, 2024.

**the living room**  
bring life to your home

12229 Voyager Pkwy, Suite 100  
Colorado Springs, CO 80921  
(719) 203-6189 • [www.thelivingroomplants.com](http://www.thelivingroomplants.com)

**Tammie's Cleaning Service**

Dependable and honest with an old-fashioned work ethic! My mission is to provide a quality service to you and your home. I charge reasonable rates with a personal touch to meet your needs!

**(719) 648-4725**  
**Let Me Do Your Dirty Work!**

**APPOINTMENT.SOLUTIONS**

The easiest way for your business to accept and manage appointments online

Accept appointments online, easy under-5-minute setup, automated email and text reminders, automatic schedule change detection, nothing to install or run yourself, and more!

Get 3 months free with coupon code **FREETHREE** at checkout!

**Start For Free Today!**

Learn more at:  
<https://appointment.solutions>

**Pikes Peak Home Team**

*We made our move...Call us to make your move today!*

**Home Smart Realty...The Smart Move in Real Estate**

**Kathy Tutko**  
719-439-0362  
[Kathy@PikesPeakHomeTeam.com](mailto:Kathy@PikesPeakHomeTeam.com)

**Kim Rossbach**  
719-330-3277  
[Kim@PikesPeakHomeTeam.com](mailto:Kim@PikesPeakHomeTeam.com)

**Find us at [www.PikesPeakHomeTeam.com](http://www.PikesPeakHomeTeam.com)**

The Garden Center will open for the season **March 15, 2024!**  
Check our website, Facebook and Instagram for our latest updates!

**McCord's**  
Garden Center & Landscaping

**LANDSCAPE DESIGN & BUILD**

- Exceptional Customer Service
- Landscape Design/Install
- Plant, Mulch & Rock Installation
- Drainage/Erosion Control
- Retaining Walls
- Xeriscaping
- And More!

**CALL TODAY!**  
BOOK YOUR PROJECTS IN FEBRUARY AND RECEIVE A **\$200 GARDEN CENTER GIFT CARD!**  
**MCCORD LANDSCAPING 719-640-1134**  
\*Gift card offer applies to projects greater than \$2,000

**MCCORD'S GARDEN CENTER**  
2720 McSHANE DRIVE  
MONUMENT, CO 80132  
(Corner of Hwy 105 & McShane Dr.)  
THE GARDEN CENTER  
**719-375-3573**  
[www.mccordgardens.com](http://www.mccordgardens.com)

**NOW HIRING!**  
Info: email [mccordservices@gmail.com](mailto:mccordservices@gmail.com)

**Monument Cleaners**

The CDC and WHO have declared that the dry cleaning process kills most viruses!

**2 Comforters Any Size...\$60!**  
Extra charges may apply for stain treatment or pet hair removal.

Environment-Friendly  
Draperies  
Wedding Gowns  
Same-Day Service

**or 10% OFF for new customers and active duty military.**

Present or mention coupon at time of drop off. Offers cannot be combined. Good through 2/29/24.

**Monument Cleaners**  
Your personal quality cleaner  
All cleaning, except leather, done on-site.  
15932 Jackson Creek Parkway  
In the Monument Marketplace  
(719) 481-4485

**We also do alterations!**



to do dryland training and practice shooting pucks using lanes that would return the pucks to the shooter, measure the speed of the shots and include special effects.

There were no comments from the public. Krob said Tahmindjis had met all requirements for the permit and the board voted unanimously to approve it.

**Board and commission appointments**

The board approved a set of resolutions at the Jan. 11 meeting that re-appointed volunteers to board and commissions:

- Resolution 3-2024, which re-appoints Susan Miner, Lindsey Zapalac, and Tim Caves to the Planning Commission.
- Resolution 4-2024, which re-appoints Reid Wiecks, Cindy Powell, Kevin Magner, and Garcia Woods to the Parks and Trails Commission.
- Resolution 5-2024, which re-appoints Havenar to represent the town on the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments.
- Resolution 6-2024, which re-appoints Bob Miner, Eddie Kinney, and Kevin Dreher to the Board of Adjustments.

The board also voted in favor of resolutions to retain Green & Associates as the town’s auditor and to authorize the Parks and Trails Commission to continue its work on the Elephant Rock trail.

**Executive sessions**

The Jan. 11 meeting ended with an executive session for the board to receive legal advice concerning public comments and hate speech.

The Jan. 25 meeting ended with an executive ses-



**Above:** At its Jan. 25 meeting, the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees closed the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA) to the public due to fire safety concerns. In December, the board granted a conditional use permit to TLCA to allow the newly formed Movement Church to use the building for periodic church services. The conditions imposed by the Palmer Lake Planning Commission at its November meeting were that TLCA must complete inspections by the Palmer Lake Fire Department (PLFD) and by the Pikes Peak Regional Department (PPRBD) and address any issues that came up during those inspections. Palmer Lake Fire Chief John Vincent said that he had done a partial inspection and had some fire safety concerns but that he had been denied access to a portion of the building. He also said the PPRBD was unable to complete an inspection because it did not have current plans for the building, which had been substantially changed since it last had a certificate of occupancy in 1999. The board voted 3-2 to close TLCA until the issues were resolved. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

sion to determine negotiation strategies for the sale of town property and to receive legal advice concerning a Police Department complaint.

No actions were taken following either executive session.

\*\*\*\*\*

The next regular board meetings are scheduled for Feb. 8 and 22. See the town’s website at [www.townofpalmerlake.com](http://www.townofpalmerlake.com) to confirm times and dates of board

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

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

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

*Church the way it used to be!*

**Ridgeview Baptist Church**

Sun. 10:30 am—All are welcome!

Temporarily meeting at  
9130 Explorer Dr. , C.S. 80920  
(Homewood Suites)  
**719-357-6515**  
[ridgeviewcolorado.org](http://ridgeviewcolorado.org)

**CONCRETE WORK**

*All types of concrete work*

*28 Years Experience • Insured*

*[www.sharpestcut.com](http://www.sharpestcut.com)*

**Sharpest Cut 719-491-4811**

**Assist2Sell®**

**We save sellers thousands!**

**America’s Leading Discount Real Estate Brokers**

**(719) 487-1777    [www.COList4Less.com](http://www.COList4Less.com)**

**PIANO LESSONS**

30+ Years Experience  
Beginner to Intermediate  
Children and Adults Welcome

Susan Humphreys  
Piano Teacher  
**719.650.8877**  
[susan.lohr54@gmail.com](mailto:susan.lohr54@gmail.com)

Call or E-Mail Today

**FIRST LESSON FREE!**

**It’s a Pane Window Cleaning**

✓ Windows ✓ Screens  
✓ Tracks  
Very Customizable  
Free Estimates

**Ryan Schutz (719) 337- 4225**

the **YMCA**

**AF**  
AFRICAN FAMILIES

**SPRING YOUTH SPORTS**

**REGISTER TODAY FOR**

FLAG FOOTBALL,  
VOLLEYBALL  
& SOCCER

Season starts April 1

**NEW!**

**Soccer:** All girls leagues for grades 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>

**Volleyball:** Games now on Saturdays instead of Friday nights

[ppymca.org/sports](http://ppymca.org/sports)

**MONUMENT (Cont. from 1)**

**Ordinance approval and Council District Advisory Commission**

The council discussed and approved two ordinances during the meeting. Ordinance No. 25-2023 established the Council District Advisory Commission, while Ordinance No. 01-2024 adopted Chapter 2.60 of the Monument Municipal Code regarding standards of conduct. Mayor Pro Tem Steve King commended the level of detail in the latter ordinance, emphasizing its importance. Mayor Mitch LaKind thanked Councilmember Laura Kronick for spearheading the project. The ordinances passed unanimously, with LaKind expressing relief at fulfilling requirements from the Home Rule Charter.

**Willow Springs Ranch PUD Amendment**

A significant portion of the Jan. 2 meeting was dedicated to discussing Ordinance No. 03-2024, which approved a major PUD amendment for the Willow Springs Ranch Preliminary/Final PUD Site Plan. Blane Perkins, representing the applicant, explained that adjustments were made to eight lots to accommodate a Mountain View Electric Association (MVEA) easement. This led to a reduction in lot sizes below the R4 minimum of 5,000 square feet.

Councilmembers raised questions about the process, the nature of the error, and the potential for alternative solutions. During the discussion, Councilmember Jim Romanello characterized the issue as a simple mistake, while LaKind likened it to house-keeping. Councilmember Kenneth Kimple, however, inquired if there had been any consideration given to removing the houses in question. Despite the various considerations, the ordinance ultimately passed unanimously, with a consensus that the adjustment was deemed necessary for utilities and access easements.

**Property tax mill levy resolution**

Director of Finance Mona Hirjoi presented Resolution No. 75-2023, seeking authorization for the certification of the property tax mill levy to the El Paso County Assessor for the 2024 budget year. The council discussed various scenarios for the mill levy, with LaKind expressing a desire to lower it. Legal counsel cautioned against decreasing it too much, as subsequent increases might require voter approval. The council settled on a reduction to 5.0, with Romanello preferring 5.0 and Kimple suggesting 5.25. The resolution passed unanimously.

**Zeal at Jackson Creek Final Plat discussion**

The meeting concluded with a discussion of Resolu-

**Book On-Line with Vagaro!**

Go to [www.vagaro.com/christinacottonatmonumentalstyles](http://www.vagaro.com/christinacottonatmonumentalstyles)

**Christina Cotton**

*HairStylist, Color Specialist*

**Call (408) 705-7446**

*By appointment only.*

325 Second St.  
Suite Y, Monument  
(719) 488-8660

**CABIN CONVERSATIONS**

Wednesdays at 6pm @ 20450 Beacon Lite Rd.

**Are you interested in the idea of being part of an amazing community? Are you exploring life’s tough questions and wondering how – or even if – faith fits into the scheme of things?**

*If so, please join a group of your neighbors for a great meal and meaningful conversation each Wednesday at 6pm. We gather for dinner in the log house at the intersection of County Line Road and Beacon Lite Road, very close to the County Line Road exit off I-25.*

At 6:30pm we'll wrap up our meal and substantive discussions will begin. Please do not feel the need to bring any food or drink, as you are our guest, so we'll provide everything – except all the answers, as we wrestle with the tough questions, too, together.

**TRI-LAKES**

More info here:

tion No. 04-2024, approving the final plat for Zeal at Jackson Creek. Concerns were raised about rights of way and setbacks, prompting a motion by Romanello to continue the discussion to February. Councilmembers emphasized the need to ensure proper road classification for Higby and maintain control over town-owned land.

LaKind urged thorough consideration of the road’s design, with Councilmember Steve King emphasizing compliance with town code. The resolution was tabled until February, with a unanimous vote to continue the discussion.

**Moratorium divides Monument Town Council and developers**

In a highly charged meeting on Dec. 16, 2023, tensions flared between the MTC and developers as they clashed over Ordinance No. 04-2024, proposing a temporary suspension of new applications under the Town of Monument Land Development Code. The ordinance, presented by MTC lawyer Bob Cole, sought a moratorium lasting until the July 15 meeting to allow the staff to restructure and hire a new planning director.

Town Manager Mike Foreman, advocating for the moratorium, underscored the increasing number of errors made in handling development cases. He emphasized the urgency of hiring a consultant to review and adjust procedures, hire a new director, and tackle the backlog of 25-30 cases that required immediate attention. LaKind expressed concern over the frequent turnover of planning directors and proposed an independent investigation to uncover the root causes.

The development community, particularly Classic Homes, expressed frustration over the moratorium. One representative criticized the town, stating, “You guys are rough on [developers].” The sentiment was that the town officials, acting as judge and jury, were playing politics and had personal agendas, making the process challenging. In response to LaKind’s suggestion that developers should not expect the town to come in blind, Classic Homes argued that written statements of opinion should not be formed before all the facts are presented.

The planning director for a Home Builders Association expressed concern over the negative message conveyed by imposing a moratorium on new developments, stating, “It’s hard to do business here.” This sentiment reflected a broader sentiment among developers who found the current environment in Monument less favorable for conducting business compared to other locations along the Front Range.

A notable exchange occurred between Foreman and Classic Homes CEO Doug Stimple. Stimple voiced strong concerns, arguing that the moratorium would jeopardize ongoing projects and lead to substantial financial losses. Foreman, in response, clarified the need for a strategic pause to rectify past mistakes and improve the town’s development processes. “I got jumped on,” Foreman claimed. Stimple responded, “If you had \$20 million invested in the project, you’d like clarification, too.”

Despite attempts to address developers’ concerns, the council voted 7-0 in favor of the moratorium.

\*\*\*\*\*

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 meetings are scheduled for Monday, Feb. 5 and 19. Call 719-884-8014 or see [www.townofmonument.org](http://www.townofmonument.org) for information. To see upcoming agendas and complete board packets or to download audio recordings of past meetings, see <http://monumenttownco.minutesondemand.com> and click on Town Council.

Chris Jeub can be reached at [chrisjeub@ocn.me](mailto:chrisjeub@ocn.me).

**HOUSECLEANING**

Energetic European lady with extensive and sterling cleaning. Experienced. Recommendations upon request.

**Call 597-1090 or 271-5814.**



Monument Academy School Board, Jan. 5 and 11

## Board discusses the financial risk of parental rights policy

By Jackie Burhans  
Monument Academy (MA) held its regular meeting on Jan. 11 where it discussed a second attempt at its parental rights policy regarding transgender students, including the risk of being sued. MA also heard a presentation on a possible homeschool enrichment program and an executive director succession plan.

The MA school board held a special meeting on Jan. 5 to pass a time-sensitive policy on enrollment and board elections. The meeting ended in an executive session for legal advice on matters related to policy adoption and implementation and for discussions related to Title IX processes, employee performance, and student issues. No action was taken upon return from executive session.

### Financial risks of parental rights policy

Board President Ryan Graham noted that the MA board heard an initial read of its Parental Rights Policy, provided feedback, and asked for a revised draft at a previous meeting. MA requested and received community input, which included approval, disapproval, and concerns. He took it upon himself to write a new draft to incorporate that feedback. The crux of the issue, he said, is that parents have the right to the control, care, and custody of a minor child wanting to transition to a gender that does not align with that assigned at birth. The new policy, he said, tries to support that position while following the laws that govern MA. Graham then proceeded to read aloud the new policy draft, which can be found in its entirety as part of the meeting highlights at <https://www.monumentacademy.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/January-11-2024-Board-Highlights.pdf>.

A parent spoke during public comment to support the policy creation and the previous resolution regarding parental rights and transgender students. Board Vice President Lindsay Clinton and board member Craig Carle expressed support for the policy.

Board Treasurer Joe Buczkowski asked that the legal opinion be read aloud. After reaching out to MA's lawyer, Brad Miller, Graham read Miller's email verbatim. After advising MA to remove the gender verbiage from the original policy title, Miller said that conventional wisdom would be to adopt the original (milder) version of the policy or no policy at all, which current political winds would support, noting that current courts would probably uphold individual students' rights over that of parents and peers. Like Susan approaching Aslan the Lion, said Miller, a decision to adopt the new policy would not be safe, but the question is whether, like Aslan, the policy is good. Miller went on to say that, like public officials who supported masks, quarantines, distance learning, and vaccines, public officials who blithely dismissed parental rights may be seen to be wrong in future years.

Miller affirmed that there is a level of risk accompanying the new policy. There are viable legal arguments, he said, that the governing party adopted enforceable laws that mandate a charter school to acquiesce to expressions of dysphoria on the part of students, and it well may be that the law will be found to be consistent with the Constitution. Just as there have been arguments about other challenging topics such as abortion, same-sex marriage, slavery, the age of consent, and women in the military, it also may be true that courts may disagree, and it may take years to resolve. He said that the recent dialogue on financial risk was well-timed but outside of his scope, and MA may wish to continue that discussion.

Miller said that now is the time for each board member to step forward and stand as representatives rather than a democracy and decide.

Buczkowski presented some concerns he has with the current draft language. These items can impact the finances of the school, he said, and the board and community need to be aware of it. The policy, he said, tries to be many things: It has elements of the proclamation, the resolution, and a sports, bathroom, and discipline policy. A policy serves as instructions to staff on what to do, but this policy does not provide clarity and confidence in those actions. This policy, he said, perhaps unintentionally, prohibits girls from being on boys' sports teams, which has been accepted for decades. Board member Emily Belisle noted that MA currently has girls who play on the football team.

Secondly, the policy refers to the resolution saying that parents are encouraged to seek legal counsel, which, Buczkowski said, is not quite accurate. He noted that for other disciplinary actions such as bullying, verbal abuse, vandalism, or theft, there is no such language, and that could be seen as prejudice since the threat of legal action only applies to transgender students.

Thirdly, Buczkowski said the policy could be seen as a threat or intimidation. The process of transitioning at the school involves contact with the principal and ends with the paperwork requirement, which is immediately preceded by the threat of legal action. In any other case of needing a form for such things as a prearranged absence, an application for a sports team, an approved driver, or a parking permit, the process must be frictionless. MA cannot tell parents there could be legal recourse against them when the student hasn't done anything. He noted that getting your name changed legally at the courthouse does not include the court saying that others may view your actions as a violation of their privacy and encourage those who do to seek legal counsel.

Buczkowski said he was trying to make sure not to expose the school to legal action but that, as written, a female student could sue the school for the right to play on a boys' team, parents and students could sue because transgender students are treated differently from other students on disciplinary matters, and MA might be sued on issues of students' vs. parents' rights. Finally, he said, MA needed to develop its bathroom monitoring policy carefully or risk a lawsuit. He asked the board to consider and discuss whether these are really the battles and opponents they imagined with this policy. He said this policy was battling MA students and parents rather than state and national laws, which were the real opponents. He suggested breaking the policies apart and making the gender transition policy as frictionless as possible. If the board adopts this draft, it will expose the school to a lot of unnecessary financial liability, he said.

Clinton, noting that the policy had been reviewed by legal counsel, asked Buczkowski if he had brought his concerns to Miller and wanted to see what Miller thought. Graham said he didn't see this as a sports policy, and striking through the one line was easy. He also said he was fine with removing the threat of legal action since it was covered in the resolution. The "hill he would die on," Graham said, was the requirement for principals to notify parents of a student who expressed an interest in transitioning. Though it might not be legally OK, and he had been told MA might be sued, he hadn't

yet seen a lawsuit. If MA is sued, Graham said, he would bring it back to the community as the voice of the district to dictate MA's direction. Board member Matt Ross said the goal of avoiding all lawsuits was different from the goal of protecting kids and expressed support for the changes.

Clinton confirmed she wanted to see a vote at the Feb. 8 meeting, given upcoming field trips and leadership changes. She noted that Buczkowski had voted on the resolution in June. Buczkowski replied that all board members signed the resolution, which also said the board affirms that MA shall support the privacy and dignity of each student and shall not discriminate against individuals based on sex, gender expression, and identity. He said he would love to hear more from legal on the student vs. parent rights issue and what body of law supports this policy. Graham said he would revise the draft policy and ask legal counsel to join the Feb. 8 meeting.

The draft policy can be seen in the Jan. 11 board highlights linked above, and the entire discussion can be seen online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M8-CCdmpyY0&t=28s>.

### Audit presentation

Tom Sistare of Hoelting & Company Inc., MA's audit firm, joined the meeting via Zoom to present MA's annual audit report. Noting that Hoelting's team was out last July for internal control testing and had designed the audit based on those tests, Sistare reported an unmodified or clean opinion on the financial statements. He said there were no internal control findings.

### Homeschool Partnership program

Interim Chief Operating Officer Kim McClelland presented a potential homeschool enrichment program for MA to offer to families who choose homeschooling over enrollment at MA. She worked with Janyse Skalla, who had done some distance learning work for MA during the pandemic, to make sure that MA's program stands out by offering personalized learning. A lot of families start homeschooling and get overwhelmed and wish they had support, she said.

McClelland recommended MA focus on kindergarten and first grade to start and hire one program manager/consultant to oversee administrative



MONUMENTAL  
MED·SPA

February Specials

- Botox Event February 15th**  
9:30am-6pm. Botox only \$11/unit. Must RSVP to Reserve your spot!
- O-shot \$1300:** \$200 in savings
- Free Teeth Whitening** with purchase of any lip filler (\$300 savings)
- Ready-Set-Glow \$1025:** Full Face Tixel Treatment, Diamond Glow, & 2 syringes of SkinVive! (\$650 savings)



PHONE: (719) 271-0999 | At The Barn, 88 Highway 105, Palmer Lake, CO 80133

NOEL RELIEF CENTERS

A NEW APPROACH TO PAIN RELIEF

We offer several new treatment options for pain relief and optimal health.

5.0 ★★★★★ 17 Google reviews

CONDITIONS TREATED: Back Pain • Neck Pain • Headaches / Migraines • Sciatica • Arthritis • Tendonitis • Herniated Disc • Frozen Shoulder • Trigger Finger • Rotator Cuff Syndrome • Plantar Fasciitis • Carpal Tunnel Syndrome • Jaw Pain / TMJ Syndrome • Sports Injuries • Sprain / Strain Injuries • Fibromyalgia • More...

\*\*\* \$39 NEW PATIENT SPECIAL \*\*\*

Includes Consultation with Dr. Noel, Pulstar Electronic Spinal Alignment, Physical and Neurological Exam, and Report of Findings.



950 Baptist Rd #130, Monument, CO 80132

(719) 359-9947

<https://noelreliefcenters.com> • [info@noelreliefcenters.com](mailto:info@noelreliefcenters.com)

One Man & a Little Lady

Cleaning Services

FREE ESTIMATES

Because we're not new, We know what to do!



Family Owned & Operated Since 1996

Homes • Move-Outs • Move-Ins • Weekly • Bi-Monthly Monthly • Quarterly Deep Cleaning

ROCKY FORRY Pgr: 719-386-1814

719 495-1798

SHARON FORRY Pgr: 719-386-9117

ADVANCED SEPTIC



Leach Field Restoration  
Immediate Results  
Inspections, Repairs

719-394-9080

[www.advancedsepticco.com](http://www.advancedsepticco.com)

NEW DAY COTTAGES ASSISTED LIVING HOMES

If being a part of a family in a beautiful home with great care would benefit your loved one, contact us.

719-266-1100

Website: [www.NewDayCottages.com](http://www.NewDayCottages.com)  
Email: [newdaycottages@q.com](mailto:newdaycottages@q.com)

1577 Turner Road, Colorado Springs, CO 80920  
10975 Howells Road, Black Forest, CO 80908

Visit us on-line and read our story  
[www.NewDayCottages.com](http://www.NewDayCottages.com)





New Day Cottages



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

Hardware would be installed in

Do you have an  
old fur hanging  
in the closet  
not being worn?

RESTYLE  
— YOUR FUR —  
Since 1919

Stop in Our Fur Re-Styling Event and consult with Our Team  
about Re-Styling Your Old Fur into These Great Options:

- Vests
- Reversible Jackets
- 2 in 1 Jackets
- 4 in 1 Jackets
- Reversible Raincoats
- Sweater Jackets
- Shearing
- Teddy Bears
- Throw and Pillows
- Scarves, Headbands, and Earmuffs
- Downsizing, Enlarging or redesigning.

Fur Storage,  
Repairs, Cleaning  
& Reconditioning  
Available

2 Days Only!  
Wednesday  
& Thursday  
Mar. 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>  
10 am-5 pm

Walk-ins welcome – Appts. Accepted

THE  
LOVE SHOP

251 Front St. - Monument

Brought to you by Restyle Your Fur. Restyling division of LaBelle Since 1919.

LaBelle  
SINCE 1919

For additional info or questions, call ☎ 1-407-341-4740  
351 N Orange Ave, Orlando, FL 32801

[www.reststyleyourfur.com](http://www.reststyleyourfur.com) | [www.laBelleFurs.com](http://www.laBelleFurs.com)





**Above:** Superintendent KC Somers praised staff in the areas of maintenance, grounds, and transportation for their quick and vital response during the extreme cold weather earlier in the month which resulted in major damage to some schools, including ruptured pipes, flooding, and boiler issues. From left are Somers, Transportation Manager Julie Abeyta, Executive Director of Operations and Development Chris Coulter, Building Maintenance Manager Leo Poirier, Operations and Grounds Manager Ricky Vestal, Head Custodian Andy Stout, and High School Custodial Supervisor Eric Wall. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

each bus and drivers would have their tablets updated nightly.

Schwarz asked whether the system is dependent on cellular service. Abeyta said she would check.

Upchurch asked whether the system would make it possible to adjust over-full or under-full routes. Abeyta said that it would.

Ridgway also proposed the purchase of two new buses. He said that ideally the average age of a school bus in service should be six to eight years. The district's buses average 10 years.

He said that ideally the district should purchase two or three per year.

Abeyta said that when new buses are purchased, the old ones are held as spares. Maintenance is less expensive on new buses.

The motion to make these changes in the transportation fund was approved.

**Other business**

The board received a report on the audit from 2022-23. The auditor said that the audit was clean and that all problems from the previous year were re-

solved.

Whetstine introduced new curriculum for seventh- and eighth-grade social studies and high school biology. She said that the materials were available for public review earlier in the month.

Following discussion, it was decided to extend the review period.

Board Secretary Dr. Patti Shank said she had reviewed the social stud-

ies materials and said she preferred that books include controversial topics. For example, the right to bear arms was not included.

Whetstine responded that the printed materials are just a starting point and that teachers individually can supplement the curricula with their own discussion topics. She said the district has a six-year system for reviewing materials to ensure that they meet state standards.

Upchurch asked whether the choice of materials reflects local control.

Whetstine responded that the policy requires that the district teach according to state standards, but choice of materials is a local decision.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education usually meets from 6 to 10 p.m. on the third Monday of the month at its learning center, 146 Jefferson St. in Monument. Due to Presidents Day closure on the 19th, the next meeting will be on Feb. 26.

Harriet Halbig may be reached at [harriethalbig@ocn.me](mailto:harriethalbig@ocn.me).

*D38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee, Jan. 9*

## Discussion of Priority 1, D38 Foundation report

By Harriet Halbig

The Lewis-Palmer D38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee (PCAC), formerly known as the District Accountability Advisory Committee, had a lengthy discussion of Priority 1 of the district's strategic plan regarding the provision of safe and healthy schools, a report on grants from the D38 Foundation, and a presentation on Lewis-Palmer High School at its Jan. 9 meeting.

**Priority 1: Cultivate safe, healthy, and welcoming schools**

Executive Director of Student Services Rick Frampton reported on the district's efforts to implement Priority 1.

The district executed a number of actions to ensure safety in schools. These included the construction of security vestibules at several schools, crisis response and preparedness training, and improvement of communications between the schools and first responders in the event of an emergency.

The district worked to ensure mental and social wellness among its students by offering support in partnership with parents. The goal is to make students feel welcome in the school environment and feel to be members of the school community.

In a recent student survey, 85% of elementary students and 74% of secondary students said they feel safe at school, while over 70% at each level reported feeling to be a member of the school community.

Frampton reported on discipline issues in the district where there were 135 suspensions at the elementary and secondary levels in the 2022-23 school year and 18 expulsions.

He said that suspensions and expulsions are effective when combined with efforts to bring students back into the school environment.

In response to a question from a committee member, Frampton said that a major problem is vaping on school grounds. The district is fortunate not to have experience with fentanyl exposure, he said, but all schools have a supply of Narcan on hand and staff has been trained to use it in case of overdoses. He said that fights and weapons have not been a problem.

A committee member commented that student mental health became a problem following the 9/11 attacks, and the problem has increased following the COVID pandemic. She said the district does not have enough counselors and that students need to learn to treat each other with respect. She said the advantage of being in a relatively small district is that we know each other and should be able to look for those students who don't have a stable family life.

Frampton described the district's seven-member security team, some of whom are district employees and two of whom are school resource officers associated with the Sheriff's Office. He said all members of the team have extensive law enforcement experience.

Staff training was provided in such areas as crisis response, risk assessment, threat assessment, discipline, attendance, and mandatory reporting.

**D38 Foundation report**

Executive Director Stephanie Palzkill of the D38 Foundation reported on the first set of Inspire Grants.

The foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization which was founded in 1994 and active through 2009. It then was dormant until 2022, when it was reactivated. The district had maintained the nonprofit paperwork during the inactive period.

The foundation's Board of Trustees and officers are all volunteers from the community, with a liaison from the Board of Education and the superintendent serving as a non-voting member.

The goal of the foundation is to foster creativity and innovation in the classroom beyond district funding capabilities.

Representatives of the foundation visited all district schools including Monument Academy during the fall to encourage applications for the first set of grants for student projects.

This year the foundation had \$17,000 available for grants and received \$70,000 in requests.

The foundation committee funded six projects:

- Lego Spike Robotics program at Lewis-Palmer Elementary.
- Ceramics kiln at Monument Academy.
- Outdoor learning lab at Palmer Ridge High School.
- Sensory room at Prairie Winds Elementary School.
- Sensory room at Bear Creek Elementary School.
- Drama program at Lewis-Palmer High School.

Recipients of grants must submit mid-term and final reports on the projects, acknowledge the funding source, return unused funds, submit photos or videos illustrating the project, and complete the project by the end of the school year.

For further information on the foundation, please go to [d38foundation.org](http://d38foundation.org).

**Lewis-Palmer High School presentation**

Principal Bridget O'Connor and four student assistants offered a presentation on Lewis-Palmer High School. Included were examples of student projects, goals of the school, multiple pathways past graduation including advanced placement classes and concurrent and dual enrollment enabling students to earn college credit while in high school, career and technical education offering the possibility of earning an associate degree in biomedical science or engineering while in high school, and career education offering internships and training in such areas as business and marketing, computer science, construction, technology, graphic arts, newspaper, and video production.



**February Specials!**

**5% OFF**  
full deck projects\*

**10% OFF**  
steel-structured decks\*

\* Booked for Spring 2024.  
Offer ends 2/29/24.

### Specializing in Wood and Steel Deck Construction

**BORDERS DECKS**

Established 1999

**Call Shaulin Today! (719) 332-6292**  
[shaulinkr@decksbyborders.com](mailto:shaulinkr@decksbyborders.com)  
**FREE ESTIMATES**



**SCHEDULE A TOUR**



## COMMUNITY

It's more than just Home.

Locally Owned and Managed

**Learn More**

**719-259-0448**

16601 Jackson Creek Parkway  
Monument, CO  
[JacksonCreekSeniorLiving.com](http://JacksonCreekSeniorLiving.com)



WellAge Managed Community



Assisted Living | Memory Support | Independent Living

Visit our website for upcoming events ▶





To view the presentation, please go to lewispalmer.org, family resources, committees, and meeting content.

Ascent Church report

Jonathan Martin from Ascent Church reported on its partnership with the district to support student mental health.

The church sponsors a 5k race in September called the Run 4 Hope. This year's race raised \$25,000, which will be distributed to School Districts 20 and 38 to support anti-suicide and other mental health initiatives.

Adult training in mental health was also offered last summer.

Committee Co-chair Holly Rollins commented that there seems to be an increase in perpetual anxiety among students and advised that parents learn to listen to their students and not assume that they know the source. Be willing to chat to uncover information without judging or advising solutions.

Board of Education Liaison Tiffiney Upchurch

commented that the board stresses this priority and said that the partnership between district staff and parents is critical.

Rollins said it is critical to destigmatize mental health problems.

Committee updates

The Financial Transparency Committee has met once in December. The group is discussing its priorities and learning about educational finance.

The Staff Collaboration Committee is learning about new Human Resources law.

The Wellness Committee met in the fall to make a plan for the year and will meet again in the spring to share wellness practices.

The Gifted Education Leadership Team is determining how best to communicate with parents regarding eligibility for services.

The Calendar Committee, after first creating a calendar to accommodate a four-day week, is now beginning again on the calendar for 2024-25. They want to explore creating board policy regarding the calen-

dar, such as designating certain school holidays and the start and end dates of each year.

The Special Education Advisory Committee, which allows parents to provide input regarding practices and procedures for students with disabilities and advocates for students, sponsors an annual parent questionnaire and the Aliorum Dei award to honor those who make a difference in the lives of students with disabilities. Nomination applications are available from Feb. 14 through March 13 with the ceremony to take place on April 24.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Parent and Community Advisory Committee meets six times a year. Locations vary. The next meeting will be from 6 to 8 p.m. Feb. 13 at Prairie Winds Elementary School, 790 Kings Deer Point E. For information, please contact tmckee@lewispalmer.org.

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

Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District, Jan. 17

Work session scheduled for April; financial plan on hold

By Janet Sellers

This reporter was unable to make a recording and attend in person. This article was based on the agenda available online at BFFire.org and notes from the meeting provided by Donna Arkowski.

At the Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD) meeting on Jan. 17, the financial management plan was discussed as well as the 2024 fee schedule and 2024 board meeting schedule.

Work session for district operation policies and meeting dates approved

A work session will be scheduled for a Saturday in April regarding all the relevant policies for district operation. The BFFRPD board meetings will be on the third Wednesday of each month through 2024, except

for December which will potentially be a week earlier.

Financial management plan on hold

The BFFRPD financial management plan is on hold and being studied. A discussion was held on how to handle and arrange for a professional engineer to review the issues regarding plan reviews that come from the El Paso County Planning Department to the fire district for comment.

Policy package requested

Chief Langmaid was requested to provide a complete package of all policies of the district to all board members and have a book with this information in place at the station for anyone who wishes to review it.

Fee schedule updated

The 2024 fee schedule was updated and is available

online at bffire.org. Fee schedules include services such as research and retrieval, medical reports, property inclusion, commercial inspections, file permits, subdivision plan reviews, and others.

\*\*\*\*\*

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 Feb. 21 at 7 p.m. For joining instructions, updates, agendas, minutes, and reports, visit www.bffire.org or contact Director of Public Relations Brooke Reid at Admin@bffire.org or call 719-495-4300.

Janet Sellers may be reached at JanetSellers@ocn.me.

Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, Jan. 4 and 24

2024 mill levy certified; tight timeline to complete merger

By Natalie Barszcz

The Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) board met on Jan. 4 to certify the 2024 mill levy and hear about the subdistrict dissolution and to discuss meeting date changes needed to complete the district merger by the end of 2024. The board discussed a pre-inclusion intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District dba Monument Fire District (MFD). On Jan. 24, the board accepted the pre-inclusion IGA, decided the future board members, and accepted a revised 2024 board meeting schedule.

Director Mike Forsythe was excused on Jan. 4, and Secretary Charles Fleece was excused on Jan. 24.

2024 mill levy certification

Fire Chief Andy Kovacs said the expected loss of property tax revenue for 2024 will be about \$228,000 for the district (based on 21.4 mills), and about \$747,000 for MFD (based on 18.4 mills), for a total of about \$975,000. The El Paso County Assessor's Office does not have the software to differentiate between the loss of revenue from the Residential Assessment Rate (RAR) and the \$55,000 rooftop adjustment, so the district cannot backfill by adjusting the mill levy to compensate for the \$55,000 per rooftop loss. Assurance from the state that 100% of the lost revenue will be received by the district in March or April, he said. See www.ocn.me/v24n1.htm#dwfpd.

Background: In 2024, the RAR dropped to 6.7% and the amount of redemption on property tax value increased from \$15,000 to \$55,000.

District attorney Emily Powell of Ireland Stapleton Pryor Pascoe PC law firm, attending via Zoom, said for 2024 the state will need to pick up 100% of the revenue loss as a result of the adjusted RAR and the \$55,000 reduction to the assessed valuation for each property.

In a 3-0 vote, the board certified the general operating mill levy at 21.4 mills for 2024.

District merger process update

Powell said the first phase of the merger was complete after her office received the official election results from El Paso County in December. A request to

the district court to issue an order of dissolution for the sub-district was then filed. As of Dec. 27, the order of dissolution was filed with the county Clerk and Recorder Office and DWFPD is one district with one mill levy.

The second phase of the process has begun and will involve legally merging the boundaries of DWFPD and MFD. The merging of the boundaries will be done by utilizing the property inclusion and exclusion processes set forth in Parts 4 and 5 of the Special District Act. The transfer is allowed without an election because DWFPD is moving to a lower taxing district and property owners will save money when the merger is complete. The process will be intense, and the merger is expected to be complete by the end of 2024.

The goal is to complete 99.9% of the property transfer by April 30 to ensure the process will not bleed into early 2025. The Assessor's Office will backdate the property transfer on the tax rolls to Jan. 1, 2024 and MFD will begin receiving the property tax revenue Jan. 1, 2025. If the deadline is not met, the board will continue meeting to transfer revenue to MFD for another year, until MFD can begin receiving the revenue via the Assessor's Office on Jan. 1, 2026.

Powell presented the board members with a document laying out the timeline of the projects and a document proposing a pre-inclusion IGA with MFD, and she requested two or three board members be identified to remain on the board to assist with the final dissolution of DWFPD. The personal residences of the remaining two board members would be the final 0.1% of the property remaining in the district, to be transferred at the end of 2024. The Sun Hills Fire Station is expected to be transferred to MFD, because a dissolved district cannot keep it, but a discussion should ensue if there are concerns, she said.

President Mark Gunderman and Treasurer Duane Garrett elected to move onto the MFD board in May to replace directors Roger Lance and Tom Tharnish. Both MFD board directors had previously requested retiring from the board in 2024. Fleece and Forsythe remain Wescott board members to assist

with the completion of the merger.

Powell said the property owners of the district will receive a mailer in early February explaining the process of the merger, the benefits to the property owners, and the resulting drop in mills after the merger is completed. The mailer will include an invitation for property owners to attend a public hearing at Station 1, 18650 Highway 105, Monument on March 6 at 4 p.m.

The board adopted the pre-inclusion IGA with Tri-Lakes Monument Protection District dba Monument Fire District, 3-0 on Jan. 24.

Powell requested the following revised meeting dates be approved to align with the merger process schedule:

- March 6
- April 24
- June 12
- June 26 (includes Volunteer Pension Board meeting)
- July 24
- Sept. 25
- Nov. 20

In a 3-0 vote, the board adopted the revised board meeting schedule on Jan. 24.

For more information on the combined district activity, see the MFD article below and the Snapshots section on page 15.

The Jan. 4 meeting adjourned at 12:58 p.m. The Jan. 24 meeting adjourned at 5:13 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

Meetings are typically held on the fourth Wednesday at Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. The next regular meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 6 at 4:30 p.m., preceded by a public hearing at 4 p.m. For Zoom meetings instructions, agendas, minutes, and updates, visit www.monumentfire.org or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

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

Monument Fire District, Jan. 24

Property inclusions approved; three promoted to lieutenant

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District dba Monument Fire District (MFD) meeting on Jan. 24, the board held a public meeting before approving five property inclusions, accepted two petitions for future inclusion, and approved a pre-inclusion intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD). The board received multiple updates on facilities, apparatus, communications and personnel, and an overview of the recently compiled community risk assessments and standards of coverage document.

Between the DWFPD and MFD board meetings, a ceremony was held to promote engineers Brian Kirkpatrick, Adam Wakefield, and Charles Ragland to lieutenants. Ragland was unavailable to attend the ceremony. See photos on page 12.

Director Tom Tharnish attended via Zoom.

Property inclusions

Fire Chief Andy Kovacs said the district received a list a couple of months ago from the El Paso County Sher-

iff's Office (EPCSO) identifying properties within the greater district boundaries but not officially within the district. The district informed each of the property owners via letter, asking if they would like to be included into the fire district. See www.ocn.me/v24n1.htm#mfd.

The board held a public hearing before approving the following five property inclusion resolutions:

- 2024-1 Parr property.
- 2024-2 Swenson property.
- 2024-3 Meisinger property.
- 2024-4 Baker property.
- 2024-5 Sperando property.

The board unanimously accepted the inclusions of property.

The board accepted petitions for inclusion of real property:

- Petitioner Gould—738 Forest View Way.
- Petitioner Thulin—4035 Deer Creek Valley Court.

The board is scheduled to hold a public hearing on these petitions on Feb. 28 at its regular meeting.

The board unanimously approved the petitions.

Pre-inclusion intergovernmental agreement

The board unanimously approved a pre-inclusion IGA with the DWFPD. See DWFPD article above.

Community risk assessments and standards of coverage

Kovacs introduced a presentation on the completed 120-page document on community risk assessments and standards of coverage compiled by the district Accreditation Manager Battalion Chief Scott Ridings. In the absence of Ridings, Division Chief of Community Risk and Reduction Jonathan Bradley presented an overview highlighting:

- A description of the community served and the fire and emergency services provided.
- A deployment and coverage area map showing four basic planning zones, the sub-divisions contained within each, and the different fire

MFD (Cont. on 12)



# Explore Three Amazing Communities!



**NEW MODELS!**



THE SAVANNAH



THE HILLSIDE

## MONUMENT JUNCTION

### CLASSIC COLLECTION NEW MODEL

*Single Family Homes from the mid to upper \$500s*  
17594 Brass Buckle Way, 80132 | 719-426-2651

### CADENCE COLLECTION NEW MODEL

*Duplex Homes from the \$400s*  
17607 Lemon Rye Loop, 80132 | 719-377-9772



## FOREST LAKES

New Homesites & Quick Move-In  
*From the \$700s*  
15725 Timber Trek Way, 80132 | 719-419-8232



**CLOSEOUT!**



## JACKSON CREEK NORTH

Quick Move-in & Final Phase.  
*From the mid \$500s*  
Sold from Monument Junction  
17594 Brass Buckle Way, 80132 | 719-301-2470

## Putting the Home in Hometown since 1989.

Classic Homes has been recognized as a leading builder in El Paso County for more than thirty years and we've been creating communities, parks and building homes in Monument, Colorado since 1995. When you're ready to make your next move, we invite you to visit one of our premier hometown communities.

*From Your First Home To Your Last, We're With You All The Way.*



[ClassicHomes.com](http://ClassicHomes.com)

\*Pricing and availability subject to change.





MFD (Cont. from 10)

responses needed, dependent on fire hydrant availability.

- Community priorities, expectations, and performance goals.
- Call types by station, measured in minutes from Jan. 1, 2022 through Nov. 15, 2023.
- The district’s critical infrastructure, target hazards and methodology.

The “living” document is composed of 10 sections and gives the district a starting place to begin writing a self-assessment toward accreditation, said Bradley.

Kovacs said in each broad category there are multiple sections within, and Ridings will task administrative staff to begin working on those sections before the Peer Assessment Team visits in late 2024. The district is working toward achieving districtwide accreditation in spring 2025.

President Mike Smaldino thanked the executive staff for the document and said it was a heavy lift.

Peak Alerts

Kovacs said Genysas EVAC, formerly known as Zonehaven, has been implemented and is operational. The EPCSO purchased the application for countywide use. It enables responding agencies to communicate critical information collaboratively. Vital instructions can be disseminated to the public such as: evacuation notices or shelter in place requests during emergencies such as wildfires, floods, active shooter incidents, hurricanes, and more. Residents are encouraged to sign up to receive emergency information from Peak Alerts (notifications sent through software called Everbridge by public safety agencies in El Paso and Teller Counties). For more information, visit [www.el-pasoteller911.org](http://www.el-pasoteller911.org) or [www.peakalerts.org](http://www.peakalerts.org).

Chief’s report

Kovacs congratulated Bradley and Battalion Chief Micah Coyle for receiving their chief fire officer credentials from the Center for Public Safety and Excellence and said the district now has four qualified out of only 1,300 nationwide to achieve the credential. He and Division Chief of Administration Jamey Bumgarner also hold the credentials.

The chief’s report includes activity for November and December 2023, and he highlighted the following:

- The annual awards ceremony had been moved to the first month of the year and occurred on Jan. 14. See photo inset of the Firefighter of the Year 2023.
- Lt. Curt Leonhardt is the new Fleet and Facilities lieutenant.
- Firefighter/Paramedic Dak Damour will leave the district for South Metro Fire Rescue, Centennial.
- The district added another recruit to make a total of 10 firefighter recruits enrolled in the Career Fire Academy that began in January. The district is looking forward to the result. Coyle and the firefighters select the recruits and seem to have the “knack” for choosing the right candidates.
- The district completed a total of 577 training hours in November and 593 training hours in December.
- Requests to the district from American Medical Response for assistance in Colorado Springs are trending down again with two calls per month for November and December

Note: The chief’s report and financial report can be

found at [www.monumentfire.org](http://www.monumentfire.org).

**Facilities update**

Kovacs said the remodel of Station 5 (Shamrock Station/Highway 83) was almost complete.

Bumgarner said the following:

- The remodel of Station 4 (Gleneagle Drive) is scheduled to begin Feb. 12. The crews will be accommodated at Station 5 during the remodel through August.
- An ambulance crew will remain at Station 4 during the remodel after a shower is installed on the opposite side of the station from the construction area. The shower installation is expected to take about four to five weeks.
- The future Station 3 rebuild design phase is underway with OZ Architects and John Sattler, vice president of NVS Program Management. The process is expected to take about six to nine months before the building phase begins. See [www.ocn.me/v23n9.htm#mfd](http://www.ocn.me/v23n9.htm#mfd).
- The district must accomplish all the planning stages and purchase a site north and adjacent to the YMCA alongside Jackson Creek Parkway for the station rebuild.
- The district is moving forward with the development of the district training center on the 14 acres adjacent to Station 1. About a dozen soil samples are being gathered from around the property to determine the compaction of the terrain.
- Discussions continue with the Town of Monument regarding the appropriate zoning for the training facility.

Kovacs said emergency services are not affected by the moratorium on planning reviews that the Monument Town Council board approved, effective Jan. 4, 2024. See MTC article on page 1.

Apparatus update

Bumgarner said the fourth ambulance had been received in the district and is expected to be placed into service within the next two to three weeks. The wildland group under Ridings’ supervision is readying the equipment for the Wildland Type 3 engine 541.

Firefighter/Paramedics AJ Armstrong and Robert Horne are using experience gained from wildland deployments on federal engines and “Hot Shot” crews to equip the engine. Engine 541 cost \$379,732 without equipment and is expected to be fully equipped and placed into service in April or May.

Note: A ceremonial “push-in” event for the ambulance and wildland engine took place on Jan. 27 at Station 1. See Snapshot section on page 17.

Executive session

The board moved into an executive session at 7:56 p.m. pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes Section 24-6-402(4), (f) to review the fire chief’s annual performance.

Kovacs confirmed that no action was taken when the board returned to the regular session. The meeting adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday of the month. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 28 at 6:30 p.m. at Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. For Zoom meeting instructions, agendas, minutes, and updates, visit [www.monumentfire.org](http://www.monumentfire.org) or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

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



Above: District Firefighter of the Year 2023, Engineer Christian Schmidt. Photo courtesy MFD.



Above: Brian Kirkpatrick was promoted to Lieutenant. From left, parents Diane and Tim Kirkpatrick, wife Ambyr, daughter Britain, son Evan, and Lt. Kirkpatrick with Fire Chief Andy Kovacs in the bay at Station 1, Monument on Jan. 24. After Kovacs had administered the oath of office to Kirkpatrick, Ambyr pinned on her husband's badge. Photo by Natalie Barszcz.



Above: Adam Wakefield was promoted to Lieutenant. From left, sibling Angie Wakefield, daughter Kinsley, wife Noomi, Lt. Wakefield, Fire Chief Andy Kovacs, and (front row) sons Cole and Austin hold their dad’s new helmet at Station 1, Monument on Jan. 24. After Kovacs had administered the oath of office, Noomi pinned on her husband’s badge. Photo by Natalie Barszcz.



Right: Charles Ragland promoted to Lieutenant. Ragland was unavailable to attend the ceremony. Photo courtesy MFD.

Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, Jan. 8

Board passes administrative resolutions

By James Howald

At a brief meeting in January, the Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) board passed its annual administrative resolution and handled other housekeeping matters. It also heard operational reports.

**Administrative resolution passes**

The board voted unanimously in favor of Resolution 24-01, the first resolution of the new year, which lays out administrative procedures that will govern the board’s actions in 2024. This administrative resolution is updated annually and covers topics such as the timeline for the budget process, the reports the board must provide to the state of Colorado, and where the board will publish legal notices.

The board also voted to sell worn-out office equipment and drilling material and account for the money from the sales using the miscellaneous category of the budget.

**Details of operational reports**

- District Manager Jessie Shaffer updated the board on the El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority (EPCRLWA or the Loop). See the Loop article on page 14. Shaffer said the Loop board, of which he is president, is working with Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) to determine if the Loop can lower its construction costs by using CSU’s Edward Bailey Waste Treatment Facility to process its water instead of building its own treatment plant. He said the Loop board is focusing on the design of financing options that must be voted on by each participating water district. The Loop is also working on an analysis of the easements required by the pipelines that will convey water from Fountain Creek to the Loop’s customers in El Paso County.
- Operations Superintendent Dan LaFontaine reported on four main breaks that occurred in December, one of which lost an estimated 1 million gallons of water. That leak washed out a road,

he said. He emphasized the importance of the district’s project to replace and repair the oldest parts of the district’s distribution system.

- District Engineer Ariel Hacker told the board that Phase A of El Paso County’s project to widen Hghway 105 is expected to take another two years to complete. Phase A addresses Highway 105 between Jackson Creek Parkway and Lake Woodmoor Drive. Phase B of the project will widen Highway 105 between Lake Woodmoor Drive. and Martingale Road., Hacker said, adding that planning for the easements required by Phase B is underway.

\*\*\*\*\*

The next meeting is scheduled for Feb. 12 at 1 p.m. Meetings are usually held on the second Monday of each month at 1 p.m. at the district office at 1845 Woodmoor Drive; please see [www.woodmoorwater.com](http://www.woodmoorwater.com) or call 719-488-2525 to verify meeting times and locations.

JamesHowaldcanbereachedatjameshowald@ocn.me.

Triview Metropolitan District, Jan. 8 and 25

Mill levy lowered; 2024 budget approved

By Natalie Barszcz

The Triview Metropolitan District (TMD) board held a special meeting via Zoom on Jan. 8 to certify the district’s mill levy and approve the 2024 budget. At the regular board meeting on Jan. 25, the board received multiple updates on water infrastructure projects and heard about a pause in planning approvals, the lower-than-expected sales tax revenues in 2023, and how street parking was hampering the district’s snow removal efforts.

**Mill levy certification**

District Manager James McGrady said the district finally received the total property tax revenue assessment for 2024 at the end of December. The district was anticipating about \$179 million, but the final amount after the changes made by the state Legisla-

ture in November was reduced to just over \$172 million for 2024. After reassessing the 2024 budget, the district is still in a position to lower the mill levy by 3.5 mills from the 2023 mill levy of 24 mills. The operating mill levy has been raised to 4.5 mills, but remains under the 7 mills limit, and 16 mills will be set for the debt service. He also informed the board that the 2024 budget had been revised to add \$500,000 back into the 2024 budget for the Promontory Pointe overlay project. It had accidentally been omitted in the final proposed budget in December, he said.

Vice President Anthony Sexton asked if the district envisions ever needing to go to 7 mills or above for operational use.

McGrady said he projects the budget five years ahead and does not anticipate the district needing

to increase the general operations mill levy to more than 5 mills unless the district loses a major retailer or a substantial downturn in property values occurs. Those losses could cause the district to go to 7 mills, but if the property valuations continue to increase and the district maintains the current retailers, even adding more commercial growth, the mill levy should not ever go to 7 mills.

Sexton said the board had lowered the mill levy consecutively for the past four years.

Director Jason Gross asked what was driving the increase in general operating costs.

McGrady said the biggest drivers increasing the general operating costs are inflationary pressures, wages, materials, gasoline and the increases in road miles and open spaces the district is required to





**Above:** The TMD Board of Directors is made up of, from left, Vice President Anthony Sexton, Director Amanda Carlton, President Mark Melville, Treasurer/Secretary James Barnhart, and Director Jason Gross at the Jan. 25 board meeting. *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*

maintain. The Northern Delivery System (NDS) is a separate entity paid for by water and wastewater rates and fees and is not funded by the general operations and debt service mill levy. To “cross pollinate” the two would be a direct violation of TABOR, he said.

The board unanimously approved Resolution 2024-01, accepting the 2024 budget and certifying the mill levy at 20.5 mills for 2024.

Note: The mill levy is needed to cover about \$3.5 million in general obligation bonds and interest, and the debt service bonds and interest for 2024. The district’s property tax assessment was about \$125 million for 2023. The certificate of tax levies for 2024 can be found at [www.triviewmetro.com](http://www.triviewmetro.com).

- The Jan. 8 meeting adjourned at 4:57 p.m.
- District manager’s report**
- McGrady said the following:
- The district has hit a pause on the NDS until the pump station construction is complete. The pump station is going well after some conflict between the construction company and the Kiewit engineers. The district has spent about \$18.7 million to date on the NDS, and the project is about 82.4% complete. The total budget for the completed project is expected to be about \$22.2 million.
  - The 16-inch pipeline that could transport water from the west side of I-25 (known as Segment “C”) has been installed to Old Denver Road. The pipeline will allow Conexus to begin construction. If the Town of Monument (TOM) requires an interconnect to the pipeline, the pipeline will be available for a fee.
  - The Fountain Mutual Irrigation Co. (FMIC) change case is processing through the water court. The district has 557 shares with the FMIC, and two parties remain in opposition to the change case. (The shares will be necessary to operate the NDS).
  - The box culvert installation project on the Excelsior Ditch is complete. The culverts were installed under the Nyberg Road underpass to allow the expansion of flows to the reservoirs

from about 25 cubic feet per second to 170 cubic feet per second. The project cost about \$340,000, with TMD contributing about 80% of the cost (about \$270,000).

Water Attorney Chris Cummins said a couple of other choke points remain in different areas downstream that require box culverts, but they are less urgent and will be less costly to install due to the positioning under narrower, less-trafficked roads.

**Water tank planning progressing**

McGrady said the six-month moratorium the MTC approved effective Jan. 4 is unlikely to impact the six-month planning process for the 2-million-gallon water tank the district is planning to install at plant “B” (Promontory Pointe). The district scheduled a pre-application meeting with the two remaining town planners on Feb. 1. The \$1 million matching water tank grant funding the district received through the American Rescue Plan needs to be spent by mid-2026. The planning process can take up to six months, and the district is expecting to install the tank by July 2026. See [www.ocn.me/v24n1.htm#tmd](http://www.ocn.me/v24n1.htm#tmd) and MTC article on page 1.

- Assistant manager’s report**
- Assistant Manager Steve Sheffield said the following:
- The district has engaged in multiple meetings with the TOM to discuss the plans and improvements for the Higby Road widening project. The project is dependent on build-out of residential homes, apartments and commercial growth in the northern part of the district.
  - JHL Contractors is redoing the head gate and the diversion at the district’s Arkansas Valley Irrigation Co. ditch site in Buena Vista. The contractors conducted aerial LiDAR mapping over several weeks to provide a solution to the wetland constraints for the Matrix Design engineers.
  - The intrusion alarm on the SCADA system at the South Reservoir pump station on Nyberg Road, Pueblo, had been activated.

**Financial update**

McGrady said sales tax revenues were less than expected in 2023 and that it was likely due to less new construction and residents “tightening their belts.” However, the district received 92% of the projected water sales in 2023, “not bad” considering the late wet spring in May and June. The warm fall temperatures generated good water usage in September to help pull the numbers up, he said.

In addition, he said the district budgeted for 50 taps in 2023 but had a flurry of activity in the fourth quarter. The income for the taps added about \$4.1 million to about \$2 million that was received in early 2023 for the Thompson Thrift Apartments on the west side of Jackson Creek Parkway. The district had estimated about \$5.3 million in tap fees but netted about \$7.9 million in 2023. The district has conservatively budgeted about 50 tap fees for 2024.

*Monument Sanitation District, Jan. 17*

## Willow Springs sewer line to be replaced

By Jackie Burhans and James Howald

At its January meeting, General Manager Mark Parker updated the Monument Sanitation District (MSD) board regarding a project to replace a sewer main. The board passed two administrative resolutions and heard operational reports.

**Sewer main due for replacement**

Parker told the board that he had attended a bid opening regarding the replacement of a sewer main running between the Willow Springs neighborhood and the Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility. There were four bids for the project, Parker said, ranging from \$1 million to \$1.5 million. The four companies submitting bids were all companies he would be glad to work with, Parker said.

Parker said the American Recovery Plan Act was providing most of the funding for the project. View Homes would be responsible for about \$350,000, Parker said. MSD’s 2024 budget has \$1 million allocated for the project. The final documents for the project would be presented to the board at its next meeting. He expected work on the project to begin on March 2, Parker said.

**Administrative resolutions passed**

The board voted unanimously in favor of Resolution 01172024-1, which documents administrative details such as the schedule and location of board meetings, how elections will be conducted, and who will serve as general counsel, accountant, and auditor for the district.

The board also approved Resolution 01172024-2, which designates the district’s website as the location where meeting notices will be posted. The district’s website is <https://monumentsd.colorado.gov/>.

**Manager’s report**

In his manager’s report, Parker told the board the pump at the Wakonda Hills lift station had been replaced. A lease for a portion of the MSD headquarters building had been signed with Cara Guirguis, the new owner of The Second Street Salon. MSD had received a grant from the Special District Association of Colorado and had purchased an automated external defibrillator with the money. Parker said he had submitted revised construction standards to GMS Engineering Inc., the district’s consulting engineers, for its review and he was working with Frontier I.T. to add offsite backups to the district’s security procedures.

\*\*\*\*\*

Monument Sanitation District meetings are 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 Feb. 21. See <https://colorado.gov/msd>. For a district service map, see <https://colorado.gov/pacific/msd/district-map-0>. Information: 719-481-4886.

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

*Donala Water and Sanitation District, Jan. 9 and 18*

## Budget adopted and mill levies certified

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

The Donala Water and Sanitation District (DWSD) board held a special meeting on Jan. 9 that included a public hearing on its 2024 budget. After the hearing, it adopted the budget and appropriated the necessary funds, set rates, and certified mill levies. It held a regular board meeting on Jan. 18, during which it passed its annual administrative resolution, set a schedule for board meetings, and heard operational reports.

**Budget, rates, and mill levies wrapped up**

At the Jan. 9 meeting, board President Wayne Vanderschuere opened a public hearing on the proposed 2024 budget, which had been discussed by the board at previous meetings. Information in the board packet noted that, due to actions taken by the state Legislature following the failure of Proposition HH, the district’s property tax revenue had increased by \$416,080 and the budget had been adjusted accordingly. There were no comments from the public, and Vander-

schuere closed the hearing.

Following the hearing, the board passed, with a unanimous vote, Resolution 2024-1, which adopted the budget, estimated expenditures for 2024 to be \$23 million and estimated total revenues to be \$33 million. Accounts Payable Specialist Christina Hawker explained that total revenues include the district’s savings and reserves. The board also voted unanimously in favor of Resolution 2024-2, which appropriated the same required funds.

Next, the board passed Resolution 2023-9, which sets new rates for 2024. The changes to rates were reported in the February issue of Our Community News here: <https://ocn.me/v24n1.htm#dwsd>.

Finally, the board certified its mill levies for 2024. Resolution 2024-3 set a mill levy of 21.296 mills for all the district’s service area except the Chaparral Hills neighborhood. Resolution 2024-4 set a mill levy of 10.648 mills for Chaparral Hills. Homes in Chaparral

District Attorney George Rowley cautioned about the rising crime of backflow preventer theft occurring in the Denver Metro area. He suggested the backflow units be individually noted on the insurance policy to avoid costly replacement should any be stolen.

Sexton said a community his landscaping company services had a backflow preventer stolen the night before.

The board unanimously approved checks over \$5,000 and accepted the December financial report.

**Parked cars hamper snow removal efforts**

Public Works and Parks and Open Space Superintendent Matt Rayno said some streets were difficult to plow due to the number of parked cars on streets. It was particularly prevalent in a couple of the older subdivisions of Jackson Creek and on Panoramic Drive in Sanctuary Pointe.

McGrady said the district website requests residents do not park on the street during snowstorms and the TOM ordinances apply within the district. When heavy snow events occur, the problem of clearing the snow is particularly bad. Visit [www.townof-monument.org](http://www.townof-monument.org) Snow Plow Information Code of Ordinances: MMC 10.08.010 and MMC 12.04.2020 and MMC 12.04.040.

Rayno said the district’s snow removal team applies liquid brine to the priority roads before each snowstorm. The district aims to provide better service with each storm by revisiting the snow removal areas to see the result. If something is not working and ice dams are building, the problem will be addressed to avoid future issues, he said. The snow removal priority map can be found at [www.triviewmetro.com](http://www.triviewmetro.com).

**Executive session**

The board moved into an executive session at about 6:50 p.m., pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes 24-6-402(4)(a), (b), (e), to received legal advice regarding acquisitions and negotiations associated with water acquisitions, strategic planning, and change cases.

Sheffield confirmed that no actions were taken after the board returned to the regular session. The meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

Meetings are usually held on the third Thursday of every month at the district office located at 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Feb. 22 at 5:30 p.m. For meeting agendas, minutes, and updates, visit <https://triviewmetro.com>.

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

*Lightning ⚡ Electric*

**For ALL Your Electrical Needs**  
Residential • Commercial • Industrial  
Service Calls • Reasonable Rates • Free Estimates  
Fully Insured & Licensed  
Master Electricians

**Craig Mull (719) 243-2257**

**Happy Valentines Day!**  
*from Rita, Stephanie, and Alyssa*

**The Beauty Studio**  
Gift certificates available

Rita Shepherd-Fear  
**719-221-1750**  
153 N. Washington St. #101  
Monument 80132



**Specializing in Residential Cleaning**

Overwhelmed?  
Want your home spic and span?

**Call Stacy today!**  
**(719) 930-2178**  
**[www.agiftoftime.us](http://www.agiftoftime.us)**

Weekly • Bi-weekly • Monthly • Move-outs • Move-ins.





**TIME FOR A ROAD TRIP CHECK?**

**QUALITY AUTO REPAIR**

**SUBARU • HONDA • TOYOTA**

**CALL TODAY 488-6729**

**706 Westward Lane, Palmer Lake**  
**Mon.-Fri. 7:30 am-6:00 pm**  
Call for appointment. We book up quickly.





Hills use septic systems, do not connect to the district’s wastewater system and therefore pay a lower rate.

Administrative resolutions

At its Jan. 18 meeting, the board passed Resolution 2024-5, which establishes rules by which the board will operate, such as the timelines for budget approval and other required financial reporting and where legal and meeting notices will be published. This resolution must be updated annually.

The board also set the location, dates, and times for its 2024 board meetings. That schedule is published on the district’s webpage here: [www.donalawater.org/images/docs/2023\\_Meeting\\_Schedule.pdf](http://www.donalawater.org/images/docs/2023_Meeting_Schedule.pdf).

Highlights of financial, operational reports

- In his manager’s report, General Manager Jeff

Hodge told the board that the district came in under budget for the previous year.

- Hodge said Classic Homes had proposed a residential development, consisting of 49 homes, adjacent to the Big R store and just east of I-25. To avoid paying a tap fee for each house built, Classic Homes had asked for all the homes to use a single water tap and meter. Typically, each residence has its own water and sewer tap, and the builder pays a fee for those taps when a house is built.
- Water Operator Ronny Wright told the board that the study of hydrous manganese oxide to reduce radium levels in the district’s water was complete and he would submit it to the state after some fine tuning. After state approval, the

district would begin using a process to remediate radium using hydrous manganese oxide technology, and all radium compliance issues should be resolved by the second quarter of 2025.

\*\*\*\*\*

The next board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 15 at 1:30 p.m. Generally, board meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at 1:30 p.m. and include online access; call (719) 488-3603 or access [www.donalawater.org](http://www.donalawater.org) to receive up-to-date meeting information. The district office is located at 15850 Holbein Drive, Colorado Springs. JamesHowaldcanbereachedatjameshowald@ocn.me. JackieBurhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority, Jan. 18

Consultants address financing, CSU facilities, easements

By James Howald

At its January meeting, the El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority (EPCRLWA, or the Loop) board heard progress reports from two consultants. The board also held an executive session.

Consultants address financing, easements

John Kuosman updated the board on his discussions with engineering companies and Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU).

Kuosman, a water practice leader with Merrick and Co. who also serves as the Loop Water Authority’s project planning and workflow manager, said he had received feedback from several engineering companies on projects they had worked on that were relevant to the Loop’s water reuse design. He used that feedback to determine the cost drivers that the Loop should build into its financial analysis. These cost drivers were used by Piper Sandler, the Loop’s underwriter, to develop financing scenarios that will be voted on by the authority’s participating water districts.

Kuosman said the Town of Monument is driving the Loop’s work to develop a financial model for the project, because the town needs to make a final decision whether it will remain a participant in the Loop

or become a participant in the Northern Delivery System, a water reuse project that is managed by the Triview Metropolitan District. Kuosman said he had scheduled a presentation to the town at its executive session on Jan. 30.

Kuosman also reported to the board on his discussions with CSU. The Loop initially assumed that it would be responsible for construction of all infrastructure required to process and convey water to its customers, but as the project moved forward CSU became open to the possibility of the Loop using CSU’s Edward Bailey Water Treatment Plant (EBWTP), which has unused capacity. Using EBWTP would save the Loop the cost of building its own treatment facility. The potential use of EBWTP by the Loop to process water from the Chilcott Ditch raises the issue of treatment upgrades that might be required at EBWTP, Kuosman said, adding that CSU is funding a study to make this determination. Kuosman said he would review the water quality data the authority has collected and facilitate a meeting with CSU.

Rebecca Hutchinson, also with Merrick and Co., told the board she was investigating the easements that would be required to convey the water treated at

the EBWTP, which is located at 977 Marksheffel Rd., to the east of Colorado Springs, to the Loop’s customers in northern El Paso County. Hutchinson said she is working with two companies that specialize in easement investigations: Kimley Horn and Western States Land Services LLC.

Executive session

The meeting ended with an executive session to receive information from consultants regarding water sources. The executive session was attended by board members from the participating water districts.

\*\*\*\*\*

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Feb. 15 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 the first Thursday of each month at 9 a.m. at the Cherokee Metropolitan District offices at 6250 Palmer Park Blvd., Colorado Springs. Please see [loopwater.org](http://loopwater.org) or call 719-488-3603 to verify meeting times and locations. JamesHowaldcanbereachedatjameshowald@ocn.me.

Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO), Jan. 20

Group hears from law enforcement officials

By Marlene Brown

The Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO) held its bi-monthly meeting on Jan. 20. NEPCO’s purpose is to serve and be an area-wide point of contact for interaction with local government and agencies regarding land use matters that impact member associations and their residents. NEPCO’s area of interest is bordered on the north by the county line, on the east by Meridian Road, on the south along Northgate Boulevard to Highway 83, and west along the ridgeline of the Front Range.

NEPCO has over 50 members of homeowner associations (HOAs), which represents over 10,000 homes and over 20,000 registered voters. Cherry Creek Crossing is the newest member HOA to join NEPCO.

Board President Mike Aspenson announced that the Land Use Committee chair is open. Current Committee Chair Bob Mooney is retiring but is available for training anyone that is a member of an HOA. They will be able to run and update the spreadsheets and files that coordinate with the county Planning Commission using EDARP ([epcdevplanreview.com](http://epcdevplanreview.com)), which is a database of current land development projects in the county that is available to the public and the Monument Planning Commission. For more information, interested parties should email [president@nepco.org](mailto:president@nepco.org). No experience needed.

Beth Lonnquist, chairman of the Wildfire Preparedness Committee, Red Rocks Ranch Home Owners Association, explained that January is the time to begin planning wildfire mitigation. Contact the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District dba Monument Fire District (MFD) for a chipping date.

The chipping is free for HOAs. MFD will send two firefighters and chipper truck. They will man the truck, and the homeowners need 10-12 volunteers to get small trees and brush ready for the chipping day and to feed the chipper. To sign up your HOA for chipping day, go to [www.monumentfire.org](http://www.monumentfire.org).

Wildfire Neighborhood Ambassador training class is coming Feb. 21-March 27 online. This year’s six modules will be presented by Fire Adapted Colorado for free to residents of neighborhoods that already have established slash chipping programs and want to build more depth in their Firewise volunteer group. For information, call Lisa Hatfield 719-339-7831 before Feb. 14.

Guest speakers—law enforcement

Undersheriff Jeff Kramer spoke on behalf of the county (EPC) Sheriff’s Office. It is the largest sheriff’s office in the state, with 542 sworn personnel and 336 professional staff. EPC is the most populous county in Colorado. The office also runs the EPC Jail, which is like a small city. As of Jan. 20, there were 1,100 inmates in the jail. On any given day there are 100-200 inmates that must be transported to court in downtown Colorado Springs. The officers have mental health and crisis intervention training. There are 11 school resource officers working for the office that are contracted and are placed in county schools.

County areas are divided into districts. Northern District 1 is Woodmoor, Gleneagle, Monument and Palmer Lake. District 2 is Black Forest and eastward. District 1 has 11,200 houses with goals of call response times of 15 minutes for one car and 20 minutes for two cars depending on the call priority. Black Forest has a 20-minute response time and Falcon 20-

25 minutes.

The Town of Monument’s new police chief as of May 9, Patrick Regan, is working to hire five more officers. The officers would include two to be hired this year, two more would be school officers and one would be a detective. Plus, more are needed as supervisors. Regan has over 23 years in leadership and training positions. He moved here from Arizona and mentioned the crime rate is very low in the Tri-Lakes area compared to what he is used to.

Woodmoor Chief of Police Kevin Nielsen spoke next. Woodmoor has eight sworn officers. They work in collaboration with Monument and Palmer Lake police and the Sheriff’s Office. They have a Missing Persons Officer, Kelly Fisher, and two resource officers at Monument Academy. Most of their calls are criminal trespass and vehicle break-ins, smash and grab, porch pirates, and mail theft. Nielsen said to be sure to lock up your cars and if there was no mail in your box you might be a victim of theft.

Be sure to sign up for Peak Alerts, and in event of an emergency messages can be sent via text, phone, email, or mobile app. See <https://elpasoteller911.org/246/Peak-Alerts>.

\*\*\*\*\*

NEPCO meets every other month, and the next meeting is scheduled for March 9, 10 a.m.-noon at the Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr., Monument. For more information regarding membership and future meetings, go to [nepco.org](http://nepco.org)

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

January Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

For the second consecutive year, temperatures were below normal and precipitation was above normal in 2023. This continued the trend around the Palmer Divide so far this winter and hopefully will continue into spring. The month started off warmer than normal and ended warmer than normal, but most days in between were cold and unsettled.

After a quiet first three days of the month, a period of cool and snowy conditions moved in. This produced measurable snowfall each day from the 4th through the 8th. During the period snow wasn’t continuous but off and on each day, accumulating 6-10 inches for most of us.

In the middle of the month, a strong blast of Arctic air invaded the region and most of the country. High temperatures reached 40F on the afternoon of the 9th, but that was the last time we reached above freezing until noon on the 16th. This is an extremely long time frame for us as even in very cold outbreaks we usually scour out the cold air within a few days and westerly, warming winds kick in.

However, this time, the cold air mass was deeper than normal and had a couple of reinforcing surges. Westerly winds never materialized until the end of the event. Temperatures reached the teens and 20 below zero on five consecutive nights from the 13th through the 18th. During the period, snowfall wasn’t heavy, partly because the air was so cold, but we managed to pick up 2-4 inches over the period.

Mild conditions moved in quickly behind the departing cold air, with highs reaching into the mid- and upper 40s on the 17th and 18th. A quick shot of cold air and light snow moved in overnight on the 18th and kept temperatures cold on the 20th with highs in the low 20s. Once again, mild conditions moved in quickly, with high temperatures 30 degrees warmer than the day before, hitting the low 50s. Temperatures remained slightly warmer than normal over the next week, with highs in the 40s each afternoon from the 21st through the 25th.

The final storm of the month began to affect the region during the early evening of the 25th. However, this storm was of Pacific Ocean origins, and this meant relatively mild conditions. Temperatures were only slightly below freezing during the event, producing heavy, wet snowfall that felt more like April than January. The relatively warmer air mass was also able to hold higher levels of moisture, and this resulted in some quick accumulations, with the storm producing 4-7 inches from the evening of the 25th through the morning of the 26th. After this system departed, mild temperatures returned to the region to end the month. Highs moved through the 40s on the 27th to the 50s from the 28th through the 31st, a bit of a January thaw before we head into our snowiest months of winter.

A look ahead

February is often a transition month as we move from the dry and cold conditions in December and Janu-

ary toward relatively warmer and wetter conditions of March and April. Precipitation averages around an inch with just over 20 inches of snow expected and average high temperatures in the 30s. It can get very cold in February with Arctic air making brief pushes into the region. However, days begin to get a little longer, which leads to some nice, sunny days, and the snow that does fall begins to melt faster.

January 2024 Weather Statistics

Average High	40.1° (-°)
100-year return frequency value	max 48.4° min 30.8°
Average Low	13.4° (-0.2°)
100-year return frequency value	max 26.6° min 6.6°
Highest Temperature	58° on the 14th
Lowest Temperature	-21° on the 15th
Monthly Precipitation	0.91”
	(+0.28” 39% above normal)
100-year return frequency value	max 1.56” min 0.01”
Monthly Snowfall	16.4”
	(+, 10% below normal)
Season to Date Snow	58.1”
	(+5.3”, 10% above normal)
	(the snow season is from Oct 1 to Sept 30)
Season to Date Precip.	0.91”
	(+0.20”, 22% above normal)
	(the precipitation season, Jan 1 to Dec 31)
Heating Degree Days	1257 (+160) 1097
Cooling Degree Days	0
Bill Kappel is a meteorologist and Tri-Lakes resident. He can be reached at <a href="mailto:billkappel@ocn.me">billkappel@ocn.me</a> .	



Letters to Our Community

Guidelines for letters are on page 19. Disclaimer: The information and opinions expressed in LetterstoOurCommunityaretheresponsibilityoftheletter writers and should not be interpreted as the views of OCN even if the letter writer is an OCN volunteer.

**Thank you**  
From those of us who walk around Monument for exercise, to shop, etc., thank you to the churches, businesses, and individuals who clear their sidewalks after snow events. It is a safety issue and keeps us from

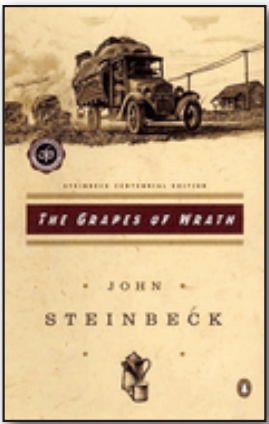
having to walk in the streets. A special thanks to St. Peter Catholic Church for completely clearing the sidewalks around its buildings and property immediately after snow events. It is very much appreciated. Joyce Lash

Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

Celebrating the classics in 2024

By the staff at Covered Treasures  
“A classic is a book that has never finished what it has to say.”—Italo Calvino  
Classics are available for readers of all ages and stand the test of time. They are well worth revisiting (or reading for the first time) as we all move forward into 2024.

**The Grapes of Wrath**  
By John Steinbeck (Penguin Classics) \$18  
First published in 1939, Steinbeck’s Pulitzer Prize-winning epic of the Great Depression chronicles the Dust Bowl migration of the 1930s and tells the story of one Oklahoma farm family forced to travel west to the promised land of California. A portrait of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless, of one man’s fierce reaction to injustice, and of one woman’s stoical strength, the novel captures the horrors of the Great Depression and probes into the very nature of equality and justice in America.



**The Secret Garden**  
By Frances Hodgson Burnett (Harper Collins) \$10  
This gorgeous paperback includes Tasha Tudor’s iconic illustrations, an extended author biography, activities, and more, making it the perfect collector’s edition or a wonderful gift for young readers. When orphaned Mary Lennox comes to live at her uncle’s

great house on the Yorkshire Moors, she finds it full of secrets. The gardens surrounding the large property are Mary’s only escape. Then, Mary discovers a secret garden, surrounded by walls and locked with a missing key. With the help of two unexpected companions, Mary discovers a way in—and becomes determined to bring the garden back to life.

**Stuart Little**  
By E.B. White (Harper Collins) \$7  
Stuart Little is no ordinary mouse. Born to a family of humans, he lives in New York City with his parents, his older brother George, and Snowbell the cat. Though he’s shy and thoughtful, he’s also a true lover of adventure. Stuart’s greatest adventure comes when his best friend, a beautiful little bird named Margalo, disappears from her nest. Stuart is determined to track her down and ventures away from home for the very first time in his life. He finds adventure aplenty. But will he find his friend? Whether you curl up with your young reader to share this book or hand it off for independent reading, you are helping to create what are likely to be all-time favorite reading memories.

**West with the Night (A Memoir)**  
By Beryl Markham (North Point Press) \$17  
If the first responsibility of a memoirist is to lead a life worth writing about, Markham succeeded beyond all measure. Born Beryl Clutterbuck in the middle of England, she and her father moved to Kenya when she was a girl, and she grew up with a zebra for a pet; horses for friends; baboons, lions, and gazelles for neighbors. She made money by scouting elephants from a tiny plane. And she would spend most of the rest of her life in East Africa as an adventurer, a race-

horse trainer, and an aviatrix—she became the first person to fly nonstop from Europe to America, the first woman to fly solo east to west across the Atlantic.

**A Tree Grows in Brooklyn**  
By Betty Smith (Harper Perennial Classics) \$19  
From the moment she entered the world, Francie Nolan needed to be made of stern stuff, for growing up in the Williamsburg slums of Brooklyn, New York demanded fortitude, precocity, and strength of spirit. By turns overwhelming, heartbreaking, and uplifting, the Nolans’ daily experiences are raw with honesty and tenderly threaded with family connectedness. Smith has created a work of literary art that brilliantly captures a unique time and place as well as deeply resonant moments of universal experience.

**A Wrinkle in Time**  
By Madeleine L’Engle (Square Fish) \$9  
Late one night, three otherworldly creatures appear and sweep Meg Murry, her brother Charles Wallace, and their friend Calvin O’Keefe away on a mission to save Mr. Murray, who has gone missing while doing top-secret work for the government. They travel via tesseract—a wrinkle that transports one across space and time—to where Mr. Murray is being held captive. There they discover a dark force that threatens not only Mr. Murray but the safety of the whole universe. A Wrinkle in Time is the first book in Madeleine L’Engle’s Time Quintet.

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

February Library Events

Adult Reading Program begins; tax assistance available

By Harriet Halbig  
The Monument Library’s Winter Adult Reading Program began on Feb. 1 and will continue through March 31. Enroll online at ppld.org or at your local library and log reading and other activities for 30 days to win prizes. Attendance at selected library programs also count as activities. Please see the website for details.

Free assistance in tax preparation is available for those who earned less than \$60,000 in 2023. Appointments for help are available beginning in February. Locations include Library 21c and East at the northern end of Colorado Springs.  
Vitalant Blood Donation (formerly Blood Systems) will administer a blood drive on Feb. 23 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Please contact Jean Carrier at the library

at 719-488-2370 to register.  
The Tween Dungeons and Dragons club will meet from 4 to 5:30 on March 1. This club welcomes those ages 9 to 12.  
Harriet Halbig can be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me.

Palmer Lake Historical Society, Jan. 18

Annual Potluck and Membership Meeting

By Marlene Brown  
On Jan. 18, the Palmer Lake Historical Society (PLHS) held its Annual Potluck and Membership Meeting at the Palmer Lake Town Hall. Started in 1956, the PLHS, a 501C3 nonprofit, is in its 67th year. The mission of the PLHS is to preserve, protect, promote, and provide access to historical data, artifacts, and other items of significance relating to the Palmer Divide area and make resources available to the public primarily through the Lucretia Vaile Museum and annual programming. See palmerdividehistory.org for events.  
The PLHS operates the museum, located at 66 S. Valley Rd., Palmer Lake. The PLHS board and members, including museum director, staff, and docents are all volunteers. The museum houses historical exhibits dedicated to the towns of Palmer Lake and Monument, Black Forest, the U.S. Air Force Academy, and the Palmer Divide area. The staff works with the Town of Palmer Lake to facilitate events such as the annual Father’s Day Ice Cream Social every June and the Yule Log Hunt in December. The museum is open on Wednesdays 1-4 p.m. and Saturdays 10-2 p.m., with private tours upon request.

After the potluck dinner, Diane Kokes, 2023 vice president and acting president, presented a recap of the past year. Each month was dedicated to a presentation of historical significance such as the Awake the Lake Committee presentation on the history of Palmer Lake and a presentation by past President Jim Sawatzki on the Life and Times of Gen. William Jackson Palmer, founder of Palmer Lake in 1871.  
Kokes then introduced John Spidell of the Spidell Foundation as the emcee for the board election. The past board for 2023 had agreed to serve another term for 2024. Kokes; Doug Lang, treasurer; and Patricia Atkins, secretary, were nominated. Spidell asked for any other nominations and as there were none, all three were nominated to continue and, by a show of hands, voted in unanimously to return for another term.  
Jeannine Engle, who had agreed but was unable to attend, was nominated for the position of president. Engle has served as a director and docent for PLHS and the museum. The membership voted unanimously for Engle to become the 2024 president.  
\*\*\*\*\*  
Meetings are usually held on the third Thursday of the month. The next meeting will be on Feb. 15, 7-8

p.m.; doors open at 6:30 pm. The presentation will be Union Printer’s Home: Past, Present and Future. For more information about future presentations and membership, go to palmerdividehistory.org.  
Marlene Brown can be reached by email at marlenebrown@ocn.me.



**Above:** Returning to serve for another year on the Palmer Lake Historical Society board are, in rear, Kathy Lombardi, left, and Barb Morehead. In front, from left, are Patricia Atkins, Wayne Russert, Heather Kruger, Doug Lang, and Diane Kokes. Incoming President Jeanine Engle is not pictured. Photo by Marlene Brown.

High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

Colorado trades in grass for cash

By Janet Sellers  
**Snow adds nitrogen to our soil.**  
Nitrogen is abundant in the air, but it must be fixed in some way to be available to our soil. Both rain and snow can accomplish this. Called the poor man’s fertilizer, it really is Mother Nature at work. We don’t need additives when we understand how nature works. Snow brings a fair amount of nitrogen and sulfur, both important nutrients for soil. In our area, snow provides much-needed moisture that is slowly released into our soil. Unlike summer rains that can cause runoff of water and soil, snow soaks into and supports the land.  
**Are lawns a sign of prestige or disregard?**  
The American obsession with lawns stems from the idea that a person has the wealth or means to maintain it to perfection. Scientific American reports that lawns are indicative of success as socio-economic indicators. Even though the landscape of the New World settlers had already been greatly altered by Na-

tive Americans for the survival purposes of optimal hunting and fishing, the colonists’ grazing in place of farm animals actually decimated the native grasses to the point of livestock starvation.  
In turn, the colonists had grass and clover seeds imported. Along with these, weed seeds including dandelions and plantain also showed up and spread across America. The green carpet lawn was a curiosity in England and France until the Palace of Versailles’ landscape became an elite influence. Lawns soon caught on in Europe, and the New World wealthy raced to copy this landscape fashion. We can’t eat lawn turf, but curiously, both dandelion and plantain are remarkable foodstuffs capable of supporting people lifelong.  
**Cash for grass**  
We live in a high desert climate where our pine forests have learned to thrive, grow and conserve water resources. Due to water and resource needs, Colorado is now headed from turf lawns to restorative gardens

with a state funded turf replacement program aimed at nonessential turf to reduce outdoor watering. The program seeks to convert grass to more water-efficient landscaping.  
The Colorado Water Conservation Board has been providing funds to eligible entities (local governments, water districts, nonprofits and others) in grants to replace turf with low water landscaping as a key tool for water conservation. Colorado approved a \$2 million bill to support turf replacement in 2022 and looks to increase that amount to \$5 million this year.  
Non-native grasses such as Kentucky bluegrass (native to Europe, Asia, and Africa) guzzle nearly half of all the water in Colorado cities. 2023 saw Colorado approve \$92 million in funding for water conservation that included a variety of irrigation and planning projects. Streams and wetlands that are affected by road building and construction also have legislative protections in the works at the state level.



Turf replacement can include mulch and ornamental grasses, berm landscaping, and various groundcovers. Groundcovers are any low-lying plant that you can walk on. Native

groundcovers, shrubs, and trees provide water-wise alternatives that benefit pollinators and our ecosystem. When carefully planned, water-wise landscaping offers beauty and low-

maintenance and does not require the fertilizer, pesticides, and labor needed with turf lawns.

Janet Sellers is an avid “lazy gardener” letting Mother Nature lead the way for

natural growing wisdom. Reach her at [JanetSellers@OCN.me](mailto:JanetSellers@OCN.me).

Art Matters

# Ikigai: connecting to creative genius



By Janet Sellers

The concept of humans looking for something that imbues a purpose for life is as ancient as humankind. It’s called “Ikigai” in Japanese. “Iki” means life, “gai” means result, fruit, and benefit. We can creatively look into our own Ikigai through the arts by making things, by connecting with the arts thoughtfully and by using strategies to improve our days. Research shows that our ikigai powerfully affects our health and well-being.

“It has been suggested that the practice of meditation is associated to neuroplasticity phenomena, reducing age-related brain degeneration and improving cognitive functions. Neuroimaging studies have shown that the brain connectivity changes in meditators ....” (National Library of Medicine (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6312586/>)). The study throws light on how mindfulness may play a role for preventive strategies in memory processes, particularly Alzheimer’s disease and other pathologies.

We don’t have to be an artist to be creative for improving our quality of life, but some of the tools artists use are helpful for everyone. Meditative practices have been very instrumental in creating a personal space for health and well-being. For decades, many artists and creatives in the media and film industries have used things like the workbook *The Artist’s Way* by Julia Cameron to create their own thoughtful framework for daily living.

When we listen to our intuition and not our inner critic, we can solve problems and of course create good

things in our life at any age. In teaching *The Artist’s Way* for many years, I offered three shareable strategies in workshops to help people make daily creative living habits. The goal was to create a pathway to Ikigai. We all know that taking a walk for 20 minutes a day is very healthy for our bodies but it’s also healthy for our minds. The repetitive action of walking balances us and we are able to access our body and mind holistically.

Artist Pages are a form of journaling or sketch-booking that help us to clean up the clutter of our mind and put on paper thoughts and feelings instead of carrying them around in our head. It unloads a lot. After about three weeks of doing this, a person often finds they’re able to leave their concerns on the written page or sketchbook.


Instead of a person merely activating hormones for “fight or flight” in their day, downloading concerns to a page prompts a creative way of thinking and problem solving.

The Artist Date is something that is known from ancient times. People need a weekly “something” planned and created to look forward to, then do it, and look back at that pleasant time for the rest of the week. This is a very healing activity that develops innovative thinking and builds neural pathways for optimizing habits and changing our lives for the better.

Janet Sellers is an artist, writer and speaker who makes and shares her artworks locally and nationally via galleries, writing, and talks on art and making things. Contact her at [JanetSellers@ocn.me](mailto:JanetSellers@ocn.me).

## Snapshots of Our Community

### Palmer Lake Outdoor Classic



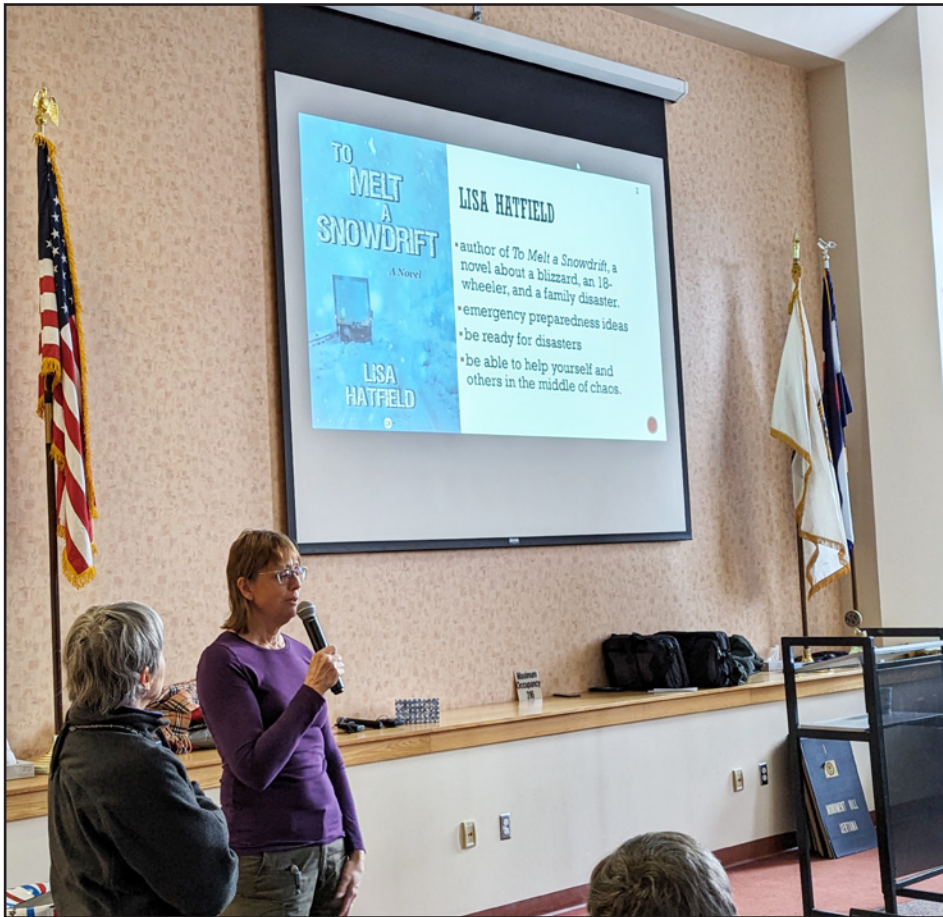
**Above:** About 1,1100 people bundled up to watch the 3rd Annual Palmer Lake Outdoor Classic on a frozen Palmer Lake on Jan. 6. The temperature was around 20 degrees when the Palmer Lake Star was lit, and fireworks brightened the dark sky to mark the start of the high school tournament. There were fire pits to warm the crowd and several food trucks offering a variety of treats. Pine Creek beat Palmer High of Colorado Springs 3-2 to take home the championship trophy. Lewis-Palmer finished third by defeating Chaparral 3-1 in the consolation final. The event proceeds covered all of Lewis-Palmer’s hockey team’s fees for the season. *Photo by Michael Weinfeld.*

### Ice fishing in a blizzard, Jan. 8




**Above:** No heat, no hut, no problem. This ice fisherman didn’t let sub-zero temperatures and wind-blown snow stop him from trying his luck on Monument Lake on Jan. 8. Of course, it didn’t stop this reporter from walking his dog, either. The Tri-Lakes area got several inches of snow. Windchills were in the double digits below zero. *Photo by Michael Weinfeld.*

### Winter storm preparedness



**Above:** At the Monument Hill Kiwanis meeting on Jan. 13 at the “Big Red” D 38 administration building in Monument, Lisa Hatfield, author of *To Melt a Snowdrift*, presented guidelines to avoid traveling in severe winter weather and ways to prepare that could help one survive if caught out. She was accompanied by Dr. Gayle Humm, who, after her military service, was part of El Paso County Search and Rescue and shared some of her experiences rescuing hikers and others stranded in severe conditions. See *Emergency Preparedness Guide* at <https://epc-assets.elpasoco.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/OEM/PPROEM-Preparedness-Guide-Final-Feb2023.pdf>. *Photo by Steve Pate.*

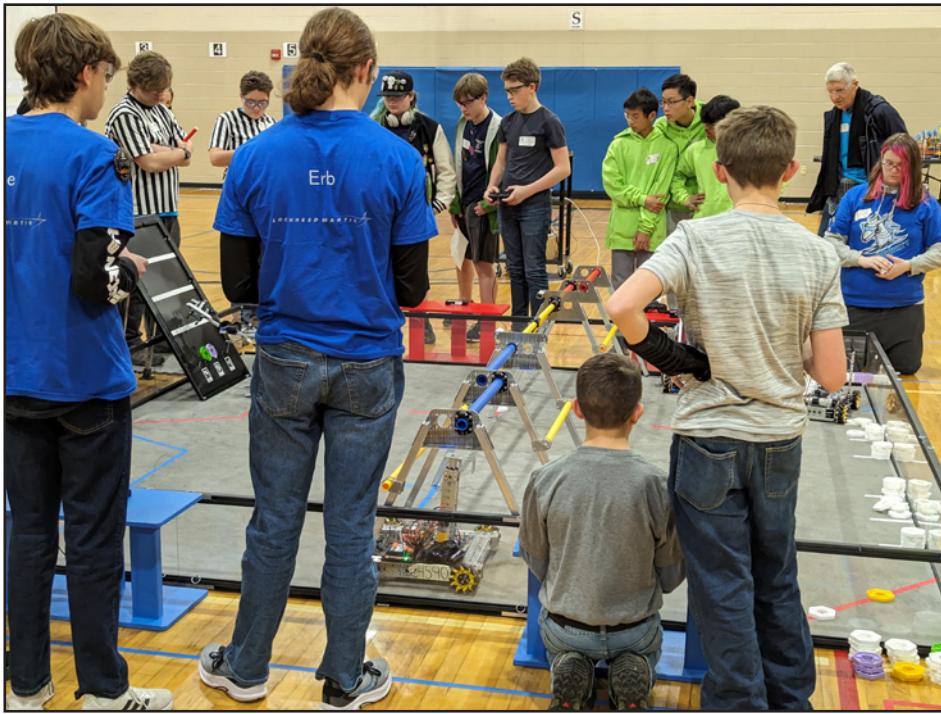
### Ignition-resistant gardens



**Above:** Waterwise landscaping and foundation plantings can also be resistant to wildfires, said Cassie Olgren, Monument’s Parks & Trails planner and program manager, to the Tri-Lakes Women’s Club Garden interest group. She described a safe, sustainable approach to landscaping to reduce the risks of homes catching fire where grassland, forests, and human development overlap and we are vulnerable to wildland fires. The keys are regular yard and vegetation maintenance; choosing the right plants, fences, and mulches; and designing your landscape to include fire breaks. See Olgren’s “Firewise Landscaping” presentation full of beautiful examples at <https://townofmonument.org/524/Gardening-and-Landscaping-Videos-and-Cla>. Visit the town’s Waterwise Garden on the northwest corner of Adams and Second Street. Olgren is searching for community groups to get involved with town gardening and the Heart of Monument Play Park projects. Contact her at [colgren@tomgov.org](mailto:colgren@tomgov.org). For information on Tri-Lakes Women’s Club activities, see <https://trilakeswomen39sclub.wildapricot.org/>. *Photo by Lisa Hatfield.*



Robotics competition, Jan. 13



**Above:** Bear Creek Elementary School (BCES) hosted a FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) Competition on Jan. 13. The event was organized by D38's Bearbotics Robotics Teams and BCES in collaboration with Colorado FIRST. More than 60 volunteers helped put on the event. The competing teams were from schools and communities across the Front Range. All three Bearbotics FTC Teams, Ragnarok Team 19541, Theta Team 19970 and Sigma Team 20771 made it to the playoffs. This competition was a qualifier for teams to receive tickets to the Colorado State Championship. Teams competed in the Centerstage Robot Game that was revealed in September and were judged in areas of Inspire, Connect, Motivate, Think, Innovate, Controls, and Design. Bearbotics FTC Ragnarok Team 19541 won the Connect Award and Bearbotics FTC Theta Team 19970 won the Motivate Award. All three Bearbotics Teams will compete in their second qualifier on Feb. 10 at Severance High School in Severance, Colo. Caption by Jeanette Breton, executive director, Monumental Impact. Photo by Steve Pate.

Donkeys in Downtown, Jan. 20

**Right:** Jake, Tin Cup, and Louie went for a run Jan. 20 and caused many a head to turn. The donkeys were running through downtown Monument with owner Joe Polonsky and his friends Jon Roberts and Roland Brodeur. They came from the nonprofit Double Rainbow Ranch in Monument, down Second Street to the Santa Fe Trail. The animals are being trained for pack burro racing, a sport where humans race with donkeys while guiding them with a rope. From front to rear, Brodeur with Tin Cup, Polonsky with Jake, and Roberts with Louie. Photo by Jeanette Lamb.

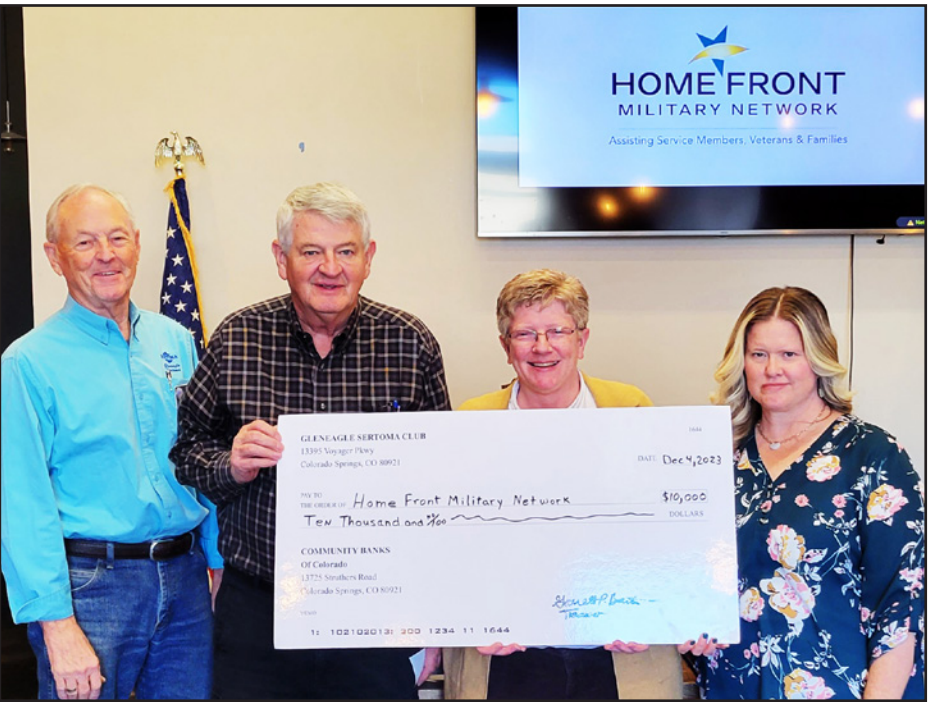


Kiwanis donates to Salvation Army



**Above:** Monument Hill Kiwanis Club presented a check for \$36,550 to the Salvation Army on Jan. 20. The money was raised by volunteer bellringers during the holiday season. Kiwanis members and their partners, Tri-Lakes Women's Club and Lewis-Palmer District 38 Key Club members, spent 521 volunteer hours ringing the bells at three locations in Monument. The hourly rate worked out to be three times the national average. From left, front row are Kiwanians Jeff and Heidi Baker, Mark Zeiger, Salvation Army representatives Greg Mitchell, Capt. Doug Hanson, and Tri-Lakes Women's Club representatives Pam Perry and Shelly Pruitt. Back row are Kiwanians Rob Knoth and Mahlon Lang. Photo by Warren Gerig.

Sertoma donates to Home Front



**Above:** The Gleneagle Sertoma Club donated \$10,000 to the Home Front Military Network (HFMN) at the club's Dec. 6 meeting. The money was raised by the annual Patriot Golf Benefit Tournament on Aug. 23. HFMN Executive Director Kathleen Hatten and Development Director Jennifer Wilson say the group has had a great impact on military and veteran families in the Pikes Peak region and all across Colorado. From left, Sertomans Pete Peterson and John Coyle present the check to Hatten and Wilson. Photo by Victoria Wynn.

O'Bryant named Sertoman of the Year

**Right:** At the Sertoma Christmas dinner on Dec. 13, Donna O'Bryant was named Sertoman of the Year. O'Bryant has been a Sertoman for 30 years. Photo by Victoria Wynn.



"Push-in" first MFD wildland engine



**Above and below:** Driver Engineer Shaun Leonhardt is positioned behind the wheel of the Monument Fire District's first Wildland Type 3 engine, as El Paso County Commissioner Holly Williams, board directors, residents and Monument Fire District firefighters assist with the time-honored tradition of "pushing-in" the engines at the Station 1 bay on Jan. 27. The district received the Wildland Type 3 engine 541 and a replacement ambulance in December. Fire Chief Andy Kovacs said the ambulance will be placed into service in early February and engine 541 will be the first of its kind within the district. Engine 541 is designed to navigate rough terrain, hold a large capacity of water, and has pump and roll capability. The engine will be operated by the district's dedicated wildland crews and, besides tackling local fires, could deploy to wildland fires outside the district and state. The ceremony of "pushing-in" apparatus dates back to the 1800s, when fire departments used horse-drawn steamer engines to put out fires. After fighting the fire, crews would ready the horses in the stable for the next call, but because horses will not walk backward when they are under load, crews would push the apparatus back into the narrow station bay. The time-honored tradition continues nationwide, whenever a department is lucky to receive new apparatus. Photos By Natalie Barszcz.



An Audio Newspaper?

We are now posting audio files for many of our news articles. Go to [www.ocn.me](http://www.ocn.me), navigate to the page containing that issue. and look for the phrase "Listen to this article." You can use the players on the page or download the audio files to listen on your devices. Toward the top of that page is a link to download a ZIP file of all the audio files for that issue. If you have questions of problems, please contact [johnheiser@ocn.me](mailto:johnheiser@ocn.me) or call (719) 488-3455. Thanks for listening!



# 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.

**Voyager Pkwy Near Spectrum Lp will close**  
Voyager Parkway near Spectrum Loop is closed as part of the ongoing Powers Boulevard Extension Project. The project to build an overpass for the future extension of Powers Boulevard started Monday, Nov. 20. The closure is expected to last into fall 2024. The goal is to get the bridge in place to alleviate traffic impacts once the Sunset Amphitheatre opens in the Summer of 2024.

**Wildfire Neighborhood Ambassadors**  
Wildfire Neighborhood Ambassador training class is coming Feb. 21-Mar. 27 online. This year's six modules will be presented by Fire Adapted Colorado for free to residents of neighborhoods that already have established slash chipping programs and want to build more depth in their Fire-wise volunteer group. For information, call Lisa Hatfield 719-339-7831 before Feb. 14.

**Children's Literacy Center**  
The center provides free one-on-one literacy tutoring to Tri-Lakes children in grades 1-6 who are reading below grade level! Tutoring is at the Tri-Lakes Senior Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:30-6:30 pm, and the Summer Session will run through Aug. 14. For more information, to become a volunteer tutor or to enroll your child, visit [www.childrensliteracycenter.org](http://www.childrensliteracycenter.org) or email Christine Jeffson at [Christine@childrensliteracycenter.org](mailto:Christine@childrensliteracycenter.org).

**Community volunteers**  
Many students need volunteer hours for scouting, civics classes, clubs, or would just like to volunteer for the good of it. Friends of Fox Run Park will have some openings for student volunteers (and grownups, too) most of the year for various tasks. Besides tasks, the group offers information and skills demonstrations for each 2-3 hour session, and celebrates volunteers at the park with annual community events. The Tri Lakes Cares on-site garden in Monument also needs volunteers in Fall, Spring and 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. Contact Janet Sellers at [JanetSellers@ocn.me](mailto:JanetSellers@ocn.me) or Marlene Brown at [MarleneBrown@ocn.me](mailto:MarleneBrown@ocn.me) for more information.

**Palmer Lake Parking Restrictions**  
When there is an accumulation of two inches or more of snow, the parking restrictions shall be in effect. No person shall stop, stand, or park any vehicle on any portion of a snow route, or leave, abandon, or permit to remain stalled any vehicle, which is stalled on any portion of a snow route and take immediate action for placing the vehicle to be parked lawfully. Parked vehicles shall be removed from all streets within the town, including those which are not designated snow routes. Parking information details: <https://www.townofpalmerlake.com/pw/page/parking-restrictions-during-snow>.

**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](mailto:info@tri-lakescares.org).

**Silver Key at Tri-Lakes Senior Center**  
Silver Key at Tri-Lakes Senior Center, formerly known as the Tri-Lakes Silver Alliance Senior Center, has been providing exciting programs and activities to area seniors who have a zest for fun and learning. As the older adult population is growing, our services are in high demand. 719-884-2300 66 Jefferson St, Monument.

**Volunteers needed for student tech makerspace**  
Monumental Impact (MI) organizers are building a community of mentors and volunteers to enable and support high school students interested in technology, engineering

and entrepreneurship. MI manages a makerspace in Monument in partnership with D38 school district. MI offers internships to high school students for industry experiences and hosts D38's competitive robotics team, Bearbotics, in the makerspace and organizes various events to share projects and to compete. Contact Jeanette Breton at [Jeanette@MonumentalImpact.org](mailto:Jeanette@MonumentalImpact.org) or [volunteer@monumentalimpact.org](mailto:volunteer@monumentalimpact.org) for more information.

**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](http://www.elpasocountyhealth.org/volunteering-and-donations), for groups like Care and Share, Crossfire Ministries, blood donations, Early Connections (volunteer from home opportunity), foster an animal, Medical Reserve Corps of El Paso County, Salvation Army, Silver Key, and United Way (ongoing opportunities).
- The Colorado State University Extension office** in El Paso County has several opportunities for individuals interested in volunteering. <https://elpaso.extension.colostate.edu/volunteer-opportunities/>
- El Paso County volunteer-based and nonprofit organizations** rely on the hard work of individuals like you. Find out how you can play a part by becoming a volunteer in El Paso County. Get involved in El Paso County volunteering non-profits and organizations! <https://www.americantowns.com/el-paso-county-co/volunteer-organizations/>.
- The El Paso County Sheriff's Office** Volunteer Program is composed of a collective citizens group with a true and common desire to partner with the El Paso County Sheriff's Office by volunteering their services while learning more about the internal workings of the law enforcement community. <https://www.epc-sheriffsoffice.com/volunteer-program-0>.
- The El Paso County Volunteer Program** is a wonderful opportunity for citizens to learn about the various functions of county government as well as give back to the community. The County's numerous boards and commissions need your experience, talents and time. <https://bocc.elpasoco.com/volunteer>.

# 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](mailto:calendar@ocn.me) with changes and additions.

- GOVERNMENTAL BODIES**
- Forest Lakes Metropolitan District, Pinon Pines Metropolitan District 1, 2 & 3 board typically meets quarterly on the first Mon. Meetings are held via teleconference. For virtual joining instructions and updates see [www.forestlakesmetrodistrict.com](http://www.forestlakesmetrodistrict.com).
  - El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) regular meeting, usually every Tue., 9 am. View agendas and meetings at [www.agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso](http://www.agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso). Meetings are held at Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade Ave., Suite 150, Colo. Springs. Info: 719-520-643. BOCC land use meetings are held the second and fourth Thursdays of the month (as needed) at 1pm Centennial Hall.
  - El Paso County Planning Commission meeting, Thu., Feb 1 & 15, 9 am. Regional Development Center, 2880 International Circle, Colo. Springs. Meetings are live-streamed on the El Paso County News & Information Channel at <https://www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel>. Normally meets first & third Thu. (as required). Info: 719-520-6300, <https://planningdevelopment.elpasoco.com/2023-meetings/>
  - Palmer Lake Board of Adjustments, Tue., Feb. 1, 5 pm, 28 Valley Crescent St., Palmer Lake. Normally meets first Tues., as needed.
  - Monument Town Council meeting, Mon., Feb. 5, 19, 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](http://www.townofmonument.org/260/Board-of-Trustees-for-remote-attendance-links).
  - Palmer Lake Board of Trustees meeting, Thu., Feb. 8, 22, 5 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Usually meets second and fourth Thu. Info: 719-481-2953. [www.townofpalmerlake.com](http://www.townofpalmerlake.com).
  - Monument Academy School Board, Thu., Feb. 9, 6:30 pm, East Campus gym, 4303 Pinehurst Circle. Usually meets the second Thu. Info: 719-431-8001, [www.monumentacademy.net/school-board](http://www.monumentacademy.net/school-board).
  - Woodmoor Water & Sanitation District board meeting, Mon., Feb. 12, 1 pm, 1845 Woodmoor Dr., Monument. Normally meets second Mon. Info: 719-488-2525, [www.woodmoorwater.com](http://www.woodmoorwater.com).
  - Lewis-Palmer School District 38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee (formerly DAAC), Tue., Feb. 13, 6-10 pm, Lewis-Palmer High School, 1300 Higby Road, Meets six times a year. Usually meets monthly, second Tue. Contact info: [tmckee@lewis-palmer.org](mailto:tmckee@lewis-palmer.org).
  - Tri-Lakes Wastewater Facility Joint Use Committee meeting, Tue., Feb. 13, 10 am, 16510 Mitchell Ave. Meets second Tue. Info: See <https://tlwastewater.com/index.html> Bill Burks, 719-481-4053.
  - Monument Planning Commission meeting, Wed., Feb. 14, 6 pm Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Usually meets the second Wed. To see the options for remote public participation in each meeting, visit [www.townofmonument.org/263/Planning-Commission-Board-of-Adjustment](http://www.townofmonument.org/263/Planning-Commission-Board-of-Adjustment). Info: 719-884-8028. [www.townofmonument.org](http://www.townofmonument.org).
  - Donala Water & Sanitation District board meeting, Thu., Feb.15, 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](http://www.donalawater.org).
  - El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority meeting, Tue., Feb. 15, 9 am Monument Town Hall Boardroom, 645 Beacon Lite Rd. Normally meets third Thu. Info: 719-488-3603. [www.loopwater.org](http://www.loopwater.org).
  - Monument Sanitation District board meeting, Wed., Feb. 21, 9 am, 130 Second St. Zoom meeting. Find joining instructions on the website. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-4886, [www.colorado.gov/msd](http://www.colorado.gov/msd).
  - Academy Water and Sanitation District board meeting, Wed., Feb. 21, 6 pm. Usually meets third Wed. Public can join the Skype meeting: <https://join.skype.com/PACujKTn7Nrh>. Check the website for a link: <https://academywsd.colorado.gov/notices-and-alerts>. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-0711, <https://academywsd.colorado.gov>.

- Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District board meeting, in person or via Zoom, Wed., Feb. 21, 7 pm, Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining instructions at [www.bffire.org](http://www.bffire.org) or contact Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn at 719-495-4300. Meetings are usually held on the third Wednesday.
- Palmer Lake Sanitation District board meeting, Wed., Feb. 21, 9 am, call-in only: 650-479-3208, Access Code 76439078, 120 Middle Glenway. Meets second Wed. Info: 719-481-2732. [www.plsd.org](http://www.plsd.org).
- Palmer Lake Town Planning Commission meeting, Wed., Feb. 21, 6 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-2953, [www.townofpalmerlake.com](http://www.townofpalmerlake.com).
- Triview Metropolitan District board meeting, Thu., Feb., 22, 5:30 pm, 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302, Monument. Normally meets third Thu. Info: 719-488-6868, [www.triviewmetro.com](http://www.triviewmetro.com).
- Lewis-Palmer School District 38 board meeting, Mon., Feb. 26, 6-10 pm. 146 N Jefferson St, Monument. The Board of Education meeting will be live-streamed on the district's YouTube channel: [www.youtube.com/user/LPSDCCommunity](http://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@lewis-palmer.org](mailto:vwood@lewis-palmer.org) Website: <https://www.lewispalmer.org>.
- Donald Wescott Fire Protection District board meetings: in person at Station 1, 18650 Highway 105, Monument, and via Zoom at 4:30 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wed., Mar. 6, 4:30 pm. Meetings for 2024: Apr. 24; June 26 (includes Volunteer Pension Board); Jul. 24; Sep. 25; Nov. 20. For Zoom meeting instructions, agendas, minutes, and updates, visit <http://www.monumentfire.org> or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.
- Monument Fire District board meeting, in person or via Zoom, Wed., Feb. 28, 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.
- Woodmoor Improvement Association Board Meeting, Wed., Feb. 28, 7 pm, Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. The WIA Board usually meets fourth Wed. Info: 719-488-2693, [www.woodmoor.org](http://www.woodmoor.org).

- WEEKLY & MONTHLY EVENTS**
- AARP Black Forest #1100, second Wed., noon. In-person Black Forest Lutheran Church, 12455 Black Forest Rd. All ages welcome. Info: [www.aarpchapter1100blackforest.weekly.com](http://www.aarpchapter1100blackforest.weekly.com).
  - AARP Local Senior Social, fourth Wed. In-person Black Forest Lutheran Church, 12455 Black Forest Rd. Info: [www.aarpchapter1100blackforest.weekly.com](http://www.aarpchapter1100blackforest.weekly.com).
  - 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#.
  - Alcoholics Anonymous, every Tue. & Thu., 7:30 p.m. Black Forest Lutheran Church, 12455 Black Forest Road, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80908. AA is a fellowship of people who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. Join us with your questions. Info: [bflc@bflchurch.org](mailto:bflc@bflchurch.org).
  - Al-Anon for family and friends of alcoholics, every Tue. & Thu., 7:30 p.m. Black Forest Lutheran Church, 12455 Black Forest Road, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80908. Al-Anon members are people, just like you, who are worried about someone with a drinking problem. Join us with your questions. Info: [bflc@bflchurch.org](mailto:bflc@bflchurch.org).
  - Al-Anon Zoom Meeting, Just for Today Online, every Mon., 9-10 am Zoom Meeting ID: 889 4142 7446, Pass-

- word 349309.
- 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](mailto:MonumentSerenity@gmail.com).
  - 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](http://www.al-anon-co.org).
  - Amateur ham radio WØTLM (Tri-Lakes Monument ham radio Association), third Mon. All amateur ham radio operators or those interested in becoming one are welcome. Info: [www.W0TLM.com](http://www.W0TLM.com).
  - Benet Hill Monastery, Let us pray with you, walk in the forest, come and visit prayer sites, every Sun. worship is 10:15 am, 3190 Benet Lane, 80921. See ad on page 3.
  - Benet Hill Monastery, Half Day Prayer Group, first Sat., 9 am-12 pm. All vaccinated guests are welcome. Contact Sister Therese at (719) 355-1638 or (719) 355-1650 or [stherese@benethillmonastery.org](mailto:stherese@benethillmonastery.org). See ad on page 3.
  - Benet Hill Monastery, Centering Prayer Group, every Tue., 10-11 am. All vaccinated guests are welcome. Contact Sister Therese at (719) 355-1638 or (719) 355-1650 or [stherese@benethillmonastery.org](mailto:stherese@benethillmonastery.org). See ad on page 3.
  - Black Forest Community Church, Centering Prayer Group, 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.
  - Children's Literacy Center, every Mon. & Wed., 5:30-6:30 pm. Provides free one-on-one literacy tutoring to Tri-Lakes children in grades 1-6 who are reading below grade level. Tutoring is at Grace Best Education Center, 66 Jefferson St. Monument. For more information, to become a volunteer tutor, or to enroll your child, visit [www.childrensliteracycenter.org](http://www.childrensliteracycenter.org) or contact Rachel Morin, Tri-Lakes Senior Center Coordinator, CLC 610-246-1047 (cell).
  - Colorado Springs Philharmonic Guild Listening Club, third Wed. Free virtual event. Maestro Wilson will conduct monthly hour-long programs. RSVP at [www.cspguild.org](http://www.cspguild.org).
  - Essentrics Fitness Program at Senior Center, every Tue., 9 am & Thu., 10 am, Grace Best Education Center, 66 Jefferson St, Monument, CO 80132. Registration & info: Sue Walker, 719-330-0241, [www.trilakes-seniors.org](http://www.trilakes-seniors.org).
  - Fellowship of Christ Church, every Sun., 9 am. Monument Academy East Campus, 4303 Pinehurst Circle 80908.
  - Friends of Fox Run Park, Zoom meeting, fourth Thu., 7 pm, email [friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com).
  - Friends of Monument Preserve (FOMP) Trail Repair monthly Work Days, second Tue. Apr.-Oct. 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.
  - Fuel Church GriefShare, every Thu., 5:30-7:30 pm, 643 State Highway 105, Palmer Lake. Email [info@fuel.org](mailto:info@fuel.org). 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake.
  - Fuel Church Sunday Service, every Sun. Service times, 11:00 am Live service streaming at [www.fuelchurch.org](http://www.fuelchurch.org) at 11:40 am on [www.fuelchurch.org](http://www.fuelchurch.org). Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Nursery and kids' service. Non-denominational, spirit-filled. Need prayer? Email us at [info@fuel.org](mailto:info@fuel.org). See ad on page 20.



- German Conversation Group, every Mon., 1:30 pm, Monument Library, 1706 Woodmoor Drive. Public welcome with Intermediate to Advanced German speaking skills.
- 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. Info: Duane Gritzmaker, dwgritz@gmail.com or 719-649-9220.
- 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.
- GriefShare Support Group, last Tue., 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.
- La Leche League breastfeeding support group, second Thu., 12:30 pm. Partners and helpers welcome (and babies and kids, too) so we can meet our breastfeeding goals together. Homestead Direct Primary Care Clinic, 15455 Gleneagle Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80921. For more information, contact RachelKLangley@gmail.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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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/.
- 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.
- Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO) meeting, Sat., Mar. 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.
- Palmer Divide Quiltmakers, first Thu., 6:30-8:30 pm at Monument Chamber of Commerce building, 166 2nd St, Monument, CO.
- 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.
- Palmer Lake Historical Society, Thu., Feb. 15, 7 pm; (doors open at 6:30 pm), Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent St. Annual Potluck Supper and Membership Meeting. Usually meets third Thu., 7 pm. Contact: Kokesdm@yahoo.com, https://palmerdividehistory.org.
- Pikes Peak Genealogical Society meeting, Wed., Feb. 10, 7 pm, guest speaker Judy G. Russell is a genealogist with a law degree. Meets monthly, second Wed. 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 www.PPGS.org.
- 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.
- 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.
- Senior Book Club, second Fri., 11 am-noon, Silver Alliance Senior Center, all are welcome. Coffee & snacks. RSVP & info: Sue, 719-330-0241.
- 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.
- Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church, every Sun., Contemporary 9 am; Traditional 10:30 am. 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.
- 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://tlcruisers.weebly.com.
- Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce Networking breakfast, first and third Thu., in person or via Zoom 166 2nd Street Monument 7:30-9 am free registration at www.TriLakeschamber.com.
- Tri-Lakes Church of Christ Cabin Conversations: fellowship with meals. Wed., 6 pm 20450 Beacon Lite Rd. See ad on page 6.
- Tri-Lakes Women's Club (TLWC) monthly meeting, Tue., Feb. 16, 11:30 a.m. Program: Sue Hess, Executive director of Reclaiming Hope, a local non-profit whose mission is to care for survivors of sex trafficking at the point of recovery, during restoration, and reintegration by addressing their physical, emotional

- and spiritual needs; Eisenhower Golf Club, USAFA. Usually meets monthly on 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.
- Walk with a Doc walking group: safe, fun, and free community event where you can learn about health topics and meet new people. Every Tue., beginning Feb. 6, 2024. 12:30 p.m. at the Baptist Trailhead of Santa Fe Trail 1916 Baptist Rd, hosted by Homestead Direct Primary Care. Learn more at https://Walkwithadoc.org, Dr. Langley is the contact person.
  - 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
  - Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7829, third Wed., 7 pm, Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce community room, 166 2nd St., Monument. New members welcome. Info: Post Commander and POC Bruce Beyerly, Bruce.Beyerly@gmail.com.
  - VFW Auxiliary to Post 7829, third Wed., 7 pm, The Country Club at Woodmoor, 18945 Pebble Beach Way, Monument. Guests are welcome to join; contact carlsonmkc@aol.com for instructions on how to connect. If you are a relative of a veteran who served on foreign soil during war or other military action, you may be eligible. Info: Kathy Carlson, 719-488-1902, carlsonmkc@aol.com.

SPECIAL EVENTS

- VOLUNTEER TODAY! Our Community News: next volunteer mailing days, Thu. Feb. 29, Apr. 4, approx. 9 am-noon. 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.
- Tri-Lakes Senior Center Age Strong workshops: Fri., Feb. 9 & 16, (fees required). 66 Jefferson St., Monument. ContactErin Eleuterio. https://www.mvea.coop/community/youth-programs/scholarships/. https://www.silverkey.org/trilakes/
- Winter fun at Fox Run Regional Park, Sat., Feb. 10, 10-2 pm \$5 fee. Info: Mary Jo Lewis, Nature Center Supervisor 719-520-6388, maryjolewis@elpasoco.com.
- Ham radio license class, earn your FCC amateur radio technician license. 20 hour paced course of study, introductory session in person Sat., Feb. 17, 1-3 p.m. Woodmoor barn, Monument. Registration fee required. For more information contact Bob Witte, bob@k0nr.com.
- D38 K-12 Chess Tournament, 17th annual free event Sat. Feb. 24, 8:15 a.m. Bear Creek Elementary School (Adult tournament referees also sought). Contact Steve Waldmann at huskerco@gmail.com.
- MVEA student scholarships application deadline Wed., Feb. 28. MVEA scholarships for college, voc/tech training, lineworker, power engineering. Apply at https://www.mvea.coop/community/youth-programs/scholarships/
- Tax season help: VITA provides free tax preparation to individuals and families who have a household income of less than \$60,000. For more information contact: Elizabeth Quevedo, Senior Vice President of Community Impact, Pikes Peak United Way, 719.955.0762 (O) / 423.333.4431 (M) / elizabeth@ppunitedway.org.
- Palmer Lake Arts Council announces community art classes (fees required). See www.plartscouncil.org for details.
- Make It Work Clinic for PCs, FREE. Donations appreciated. We are gauging interest in helping community members with their PCs, please email us if interested. enable@monumentalimpact.org. 55 Adams St in Downtown Monument. Monumental Impact info/register: https://monumentalimpact.org.
- Affordable Flooring Connection: Sales and installation. See ad on page 2.
- Appointment Solutions: manage appointments online, start free today. See ad on page 5.
- Borders Decks special offers in February see ad on page 9.
- Cornerstone Cleaners, special offers through Feb. 29. 1030 W. Baptist Road, near King Soopers. See ad on page 4.
- Eagle Wine & Spirits, special offers through Feb. 29. Baptist Road next to King Soopers. See ad on page 3.
- Fuel Church 10th anniversary reunion, Sun., Feb. 25, 10:45 am. 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. See ad on page 20.
- Gleneagle Candle Co., special offers with ad through Feb. 29. 13796 Gleneagle Drive 80921. See ad on page 3.

Content

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

Unlike papers that try to figure out what the “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 supplemented with board packet information. 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.

- Kiwanis Stars of Tomorrow talent competition for D-38 grades 1-12. Cash prizes. Application deadline Sat., Feb. 10, see ad on page 2.
- The Love Shop: Restyle your furs, Wed.-Thu., Mar. 13-14; 251 Front St. See ad on page 8.
- McCord's Garden center special offers. Opening Fri., Mar. 15. \$200 gift card offer- see ad on page 5.
- Monument Cleaners, special offers through Feb. 29. 15932 Jackson Creek Pkwy., in Monument Marketplace. See ad on page 5.
- Monumental Med Spa special offers for Feb. 88 Hwy 105 Palmer Lake. See ad on page 7.
- Mountain View Pella windows, special offers 30% off all windows and doors. See ad on page 20.
- Noel Relief Centers, new patient specials, new treatment options. 950 Baptist Rd #130, Monument. See ad on page 7.
- Peak View Windows, Stucco, Siding, Doors and More. Special offers through Feb. 29. See ad on page 20.
- Silver Key senior services, companionship services and more including friendly home visits. Volunteers needed. 719-884-2300. See ad on page 2.
- St. Peter Catholic School open house, Sun., Feb. 28, 8 am-3 pm, 124 First St., Monument. See ad on page 2.
- The Living Room Plants, special offers with ad through Feb. 29. 12229 Voyager Pkwy, Suite 100. See ad on page 2.
- Tri-Lakes Collision and Auto Service Center, special offers through Feb. 29. 2101 Wolf Court, Monument. TriLakesCollision.com. See ad on page 5.
- YMCA Special offers: Spring youth sports registration open now. Sport season starts Apr. 1. See ad on page 6.

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.

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, Mar. 2

Ad space reservations due: **Fri., Feb. 9**  
Finished ad artwork due: **Fri., Feb. 16**  
Letters to the editor due: **Fri., Feb. 16**  
Calendar items due: **Fri., Feb. 23**

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



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

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

© Copyright 2001-2024  
**Our Community News, Inc.**  
P.O. Box 1742  
Monument, Colorado 80132-1742  
*All rights reserved.*



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

FUEL CHURCH 10TH  
ANNIVERSARY

reunion

february 25th 2024 at 10:45am

Service held at  
Mountain Community  
Mennonite Church  
643 State Highway 105,  
Palmer Lake, CO 80133

f

Support Our Community.  
Patronize OCN  
Advertisers!

Did you know that our advertisers are the reason Our Community News is mailed FREE to the entire Tri-Lakes community?

Our mailed circulation each month exceeds 22,700. We also place another 600 papers each month in stacks at local businesses.

Our advertisers' willingness to advertise in OCN makes free distribution of this newspaper possible. Please let them know you saw their ad in OCN when patronizing their business!

Thank you for your support!  
Please shop Tri-Lakes and  
Black Forest businesses!

Spa Medica LLC  
custom skin solutions

SKIN & LASER Medical Spa  
Where Science meets Beauty  
FREE NO OBLIGATION  
CONSULTATION



Laser Hair  
Removal, Laser  
Toenail Fungus  
treatment,  
Radio-  
Frequency, Injections, Fillers,  
and Facials. B12 Injections to  
Boost Your Immune System.

Our clients say it best...

"I had Botox and Filler done by Elba and she did a fantastic job. I always had these procedures done by a plastic surgeon and Elba did a way better job."—  
DEBRA B.

"Thank you for the excellent treatment on my feet."—GREG M.

Elba D'Asaro, RN  
719-487-SKIN (7546)  
550 Hwy 105, Suite 100  
Monument, CO  
[www.spameplz.com](http://www.spameplz.com)



Pella

Windows & Doors  
of Colorado Springs



25% OFF QUALIFYING  
PELLA PROJECTS



INTERESTED IN A CONSULTATION FOR YOUR  
WINDOWS AND DOORS?

GIVE US A CALL OR SCAN THIS QR CODE TO SCHEDULE YOUR  
APPOINTMENT NOW!

719 - 634 - 6151

6380 CORPORATE CENTRE CIRCLE, COLORADO SPRINGS, CO

Support Our  
Community.  
Advertise  
in OCN!

We offer inexpensive ads especially considering our very large circulation.

Every month more than 22,600 copies of OCN are delivered by mail to businesses and residents throughout the Tri-Lakes area. Another 700 copies are placed in stacks in local shops and offices.

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

ESTATE PLANNING  
& PROBATE

Secure your legacy with expert attorneys and premier estate planning services.

From the complexities of Probate to writing wills, our team of experienced attorneys is dedicated to preserving your legacy and providing peace of mind in some of life's transitions.

Life Happens. Let Us Help.

Peakstone Law Group  
719.264.9858  
5475 Tech Center Dr.  
Colorado Springs,  
CO 80919



PEAKSTONE  
LAW GROUP

Custom Homes in the Tri-Lakes Area



John Bailey • Bailey Homes, Inc. • 719-649-6798

Tri-Lakes resident since 1987. Tri-Lakes contractor since 1993.  
Licensed for all phases of residential construction.  
[www.BaileyHomesMonument.com](http://www.BaileyHomesMonument.com)



PEAKVIEW  
Windows, Siding, Stucco  
"Tops in Quality - Tops in Service"



LOCALLY OWNED  
VETERAN  
SMALL BUSINESS

0% financing

 719-393-7325

[Peakviewwindows.com](http://Peakviewwindows.com)



yelp



4.6 Rating

SUPER SERVICE  
Angie's list  
AWARD

A+  
BBB  
ACCREDITED BUSINESS

OFFERING

- WINDOWS
- STUCCO
- SIDING
- DOORS
- SOFFIT & FASCIA
- STACKED STONE

\$1100 OFF

STUCCO OR SIDING PROJECT

\*1400 sq/ft minimum. Cannot be combined with other offers or discounts.  
Expires 2/29/24

\$60 OFF

PER WINDOW\*

\*Minimum 5 windows. Cannot be combined with other offers or discounts.  
Expires 2/29/24

