

In fact, the fire district's own 2013 property tax income projections are higher than 2012, without the tax increase. Yes, the district projects greater income next year and still wants more from your property taxes.

If approved, 5C would increase taxes to the fire department 33 percent indefinitely. We are told the district would be able to hire six more firefighters using a federal grant at zero cost for the next two years. Then we must either find another way to pay for them or lay them off. We would be back in the same position we currently find ourselves, as it is not popular to lay off firefighters.

To understand whether our county is providing similar levels of fire station coverage comparable to other areas of Colorado, we can count the fire stations. According to the fire department directory, El Paso County has the most fire stations of any Colorado county. If the only solution to account for the perceived budget problems is for Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District is to close a station, another is only 4 miles away.

The fear from fires this summer has made the burden of this tax increase seem acceptable to protect your home from fire. However, it is your homeowner's insurance fire protection that protects the value of your home; the Fire Department minimizes the damage and keeps the fire from spreading. For these reasons, I will be voting no on Tax Increase 5C.

Decide well.

Adam Cupp

Town official updates funding figures

Thank you for the opportunity to clarify a few issues presented in the Oct. 6 edition of OCN regarding the recent award of federal funds to the Town of Monument for the construction of sidewalks and a traffic circle in the downtown area.

In the article covering the Sept. 17 Monument Board of Trustees meeting ("Water rate increase options proposed"), under Staff Reports, it mentions that I "praised Bob Torres, the engineering consultant who prepared the complicated proposal documentation" that led to the funding we received for the Downtown Sidewalks project. This is not an accurate representation of what was stated at the meeting, since my staff and I prepared the application entirely in-house.

Once we received the notification of the award, Mr. Torres' firm, Jacobs Engineering, was selected to be the consulting engineer for the project. Jacobs is one of the town's "on-call" engineering consultants. They were chosen for the design portion of this project not only because of their prior excellent work on several town projects, but because of Bob's familiarity with the CDOT funding mechanism and with the process for using the federal dollars we have been awarded. Bob was formerly the CDOT Region 2 director, so he has worked for decades with this type of funding and knows the "ins and outs" of the process as well as anyone. Since this is our first time ex-

periencing this process, Jacobs was the logical choice for this assignment.

Also, the article mentioned that the town's matching funds would come from stormwater impact fees. The town's required 20 percent match for this project is not necessarily being taken from this account. This line item is a possibility for partial funding, since there will be some positive drainage impacts in the downtown area with the installation of the associated curbing to channel water to existing drainage facilities. However, the installation of sidewalks is not solely a stormwater project, so these impact fees cannot be the only source of the town's matching funds.

Finally, the \$895,000 award amount quoted in the article is incorrect. We have been allocated \$780,000 for the Sidewalks project (with our 20 percent match, the total estimated cost for the project is \$975,000). The breakdown for the Traffic Circle project is \$220,000 in federal funds with a \$55,000 local match—for a total project budget of \$275,000. Thus, the total federal funding amount we have been promised is \$1 million for the two projects.

Tom Kassawara, P.E.

Director of Development Services
Town of Monument

Between The Covers at the Covered Treasures Bookstore

Falling in love with books

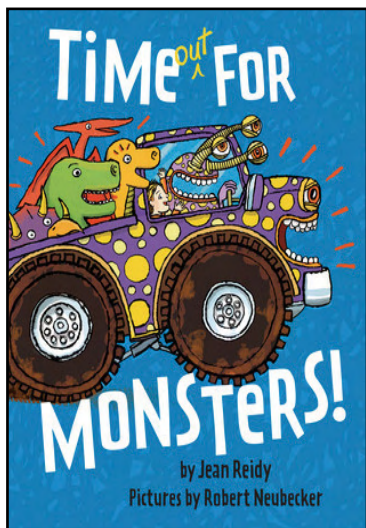
By the staff at Covered Treasures

One of the best gifts anyone can give young children is to instill in them a love of books and reading. Following are some new volumes that rapidly become favorites through beautiful and clever illustrations, catchy stories, and surprising special touches.

Time Out for Monsters!

By Jean Reidy & Robert Neubecker (Disney) \$16.99

This delightful book begins with a typical child who spends a lot of time in a certain corner of his home. When he decides the corner needs a little fixing up his imagination goes wild, and everything from dragons and monsters to cupcakes and ice cream appears in living color, and he's sure Mom will love it.



Dig Dig Digging

By Margaret Mayo & Alex Ayliffe (Henry Holt & Co.) \$16.99

Trucks and tractors, fire engines, and helicopters—they all like to work hard. But after a long day of beep-beeping and vroom-vrooming, even the busiest engines need to rest. This bright, bouncy, noise-filled book brings together the vehicles that children adore.

I Say, You Say: Animal Sounds!

By Tad Carpenter (Little, Brown & Co.) \$6.99

I say "Reading!" You say "Fun!" This colorful, playful book encourages young children to explore the world of noisy animals with eight lift-the-flaps. They can call out animal names and noises, practice new words, and learn while having fun.

Goodnight, Goodnight, Construction Site

By Sherri Duskey Rinker and Tom Lichtenheld (Chronicle Books) \$16.99

Down in the big construction site, tough trucks work with all their might. But now it's time to say goodnight. Even the roughest, toughest readers will want to turn off their engines, rest their wheels, and drift to sleep with this sweet and soothing story. Vibrant, playful illustrations and gentle, rhyming text make this a surefire bedtime favorite for truck-crazy kids everywhere.

Silly Doggy!

By Adam Stower (Scholastic Inc.) \$16.99

One morning, Lily saw something wonderful in her garden. It had four legs, a tail, and a big, wet nose ... and Lily had always wanted one! Lily's "doggy" turns out to be something else, and her adventures with him are chronicled through whimsical illustrations. This book is sure to appeal to any child who has a pet, or has ever wished for one.

The Dot

By Peter H. Reynolds (Candlewick Press) \$14

"Just make a mark and see where it takes you." The words of Vashti's teacher are a gentle invitation to self-expression. But Vashti can't draw—she's no artist. To prove her point, Vashti jabs at a blank sheet of paper, leaving an unremarkable, angry dot. That one little dot marks the beginning of Vashti's journey of surprise and self-discovery. That one little dot marks the beginning of this delicate fable about the creative spirit in all of us.

Andrew Drew and Drew

By Barney Saltzberg (Abrams) \$15.95

If you love to draw, if you love to imagine, you will love Andrew. Follow him as he doodles his way through the flaps and folds of an unusual book. This Caldecott Medal winner will entertain children and adults alike.

Star Wars: A Galactic Pop-Up Adventure

By Matthew Reinhart (Orchard Books) \$36.99

Explore the characters, droids, creatures, planets, vehicles, and galactic adventures in this brand-new guide to the galaxy. With over 25 amazing pop-ups and a lightsaber that changes color, this extraordinary three-dimensional journey into the Star Wars universe will excite fans of all ages.

Illusionology: The Secret Science of Magic

By Albert D. Schafer (Candlewick Press) \$19.99

From optical illusions and card tricks to Harry Houdini's magical straitjacket escapes and the science of mind reading, this clever book explores the history, science, and magic of illusions. Readers are advised that while various tricks are presented for practical presentation, on no account should some illusions be tried at home. For the older child or adult who has always loved impossible deeds, this beautiful volume is packed with information.

Birthdays, Christmas, New Year's, or any day, will be special for the child in your life if he or she has a delightful new book in hand. And some books bring out the child in all of us.

Until next month, happy reading.

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