

Our Community News

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



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Our Community News

Local Events

See pages 31-36 for details of these and many other local events.

Wescott Fire Protection District Santa Patrol, Dec. 6 Antelope Trails 10:00 a.m., Big R 10:40 a.m., Ridge Point Apts, 11:10 a.m. Bella Springs Apts, 11:40 a.m., Angel Mist Park Apts, 12:10 a.m.

Kiwanis 9th Annual North Pole at Tri-Lakes Arts and Crafts Fair, Sat.-Sun., Dec. 6-7 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Monument's Small Town Christmas, Sat., Dec. 6, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Breakfast with Santa at Monument Hill Country Club, Sun., Dec 7, 9:30 a.m.

Palmer Lake Yule Log Pot Luck Dinner, Tue., Dec. 9, 6 p.m.

A White Bluegrass Christmas with Wire-Wood Station at Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts Fri., Dec. 12, 7 p.m.

Monument's Small Town Christmas Holiday Open House, Sat., Dec 13, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Annual Palmer Lake Yule Log Hunt, Sun., Dec. 14, 1 p.m.

Santa Visits the Woodmoor Barn, Sun., Dec 14, 3-6:30 p.m.

Gleneagle Festival of Lights and Hayride, Sun., Dec. 14, 5-8 p.m.

Tri-Lakes Music Association (TLMA) presents "The Light of Christmas" by Phil Barfoot, Fri.-Sun., Dec. 19-21

Western Museum of Mining & Industry (WMMI) Family Exploration Day Geology, Sat., Jan 3, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) Class, Thu-Sat., Jan 29-31. □

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Above: The Lewis-Palmer High School Volleyball Team members are, from left, rear, Michaela Putnicki, Nicole Montgomery, Alexa Smith, Elizabeth Reich, Amber Matalus, and Lydia Bartalo, In front row are Aleyna Kennel, Elaine Thibadeau, Tylar Fugate, and Coach Susan Odenbaugh. *Photo by Harriet Halbig.*

Lewis-Palmer Board of Education, Nov. 20

Citizens air concerns about Common Core and assessments

By Harriet Halbig

Several local citizens attended the Nov. 20 meeting of the Lewis-Palmer Board of Education to express their concerns about new assessments administered last spring.

Board Vice President John Mann sent a letter to the community reminding them that the board passed a resolution last spring stating its opposition to federal mandates and the state requiring implementation of Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) tests. Twelve states and the District of Columbia are involved in the partnership.

Mann's premise is that the district is the best judge of what is needed for its students to continue to excel, and the district's standards are consistently higher than those of the state. Nonetheless, refusal to participate in these assessments could have real consequences in terms of loss of grants and funding and a lowering of the district's accreditation level.

For these reasons, Mann asked in his

letter that the community continue to participate in the assessments because loss of funding could impact curriculum and loss of accreditation could impact local property values and the ability of graduates to gain admission to excellent colleges.

While the concern for loss of local control is real, Mann said in his letter, it is up to the state government to reverse the requirement to participate in these assessments.

The Board of Education held a meeting on the day before the board meeting and many parents came to discuss the issue. Several came to the board meeting to air their concerns.

The first of the citizens thanked Mann for his support of parent concerns but said that she had contacted several prestigious college admissions departments and was told that they place more stress on an individual student's activities and achievements than on a district's accreditation. She encouraged the board to take back local control.

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Above: From left are LPHS Principal Sandi Brandl, National Merit semi-finalist Hanna Hartel, Superintendent Karen Brofft, and board President Mark Pfoff. (Not in attendance were Brian Boylen of Palmer Ridge who received a commendation; Bryce Herndon, Tyler Morgan, and Spencer Randell of LPHS who received commendations; and Benjamin McClung, a semi-finalist from LPHS. *Photo by Harriet Halbig.*

Tri-Lakes Facility Joint Use Committee, Nov. 11

2015 budget remains a problem

By Jim Kendrick

On Nov. 11, Don Smith, president of the Joint Use Committee (JUC) of the Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility, noted that the meeting was taking place on Veterans Day and thanked all military veterans in attendance and all those that support the military. The JUC tentatively approved the fourth draft of the 2015 Tri-Lakes budget. However, due to unresolved cost-sharing issues regarding the new total phosphorus treatment clarifier expansion, it remains to be seen if the boards of each of the three districts that own the facility will approve the 2015 facility budget.

The Tri-Lakes facility operates as a separate public utility and is jointly owned, in equal one-third shares, by Monument Sanitation District (MSD), Palmer Lake Sanitation District (PLSD), and Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD). The three-member JUC acts as the board of the facility and consists of one director from each of the three owner districts' boards: Don Smith of Monument, Ken Smith of Palmer Lake, and Rich Strom of Woodmoor. Tri-Lakes accountant Jackie Spegele of Numeric Strategies LLC attended to better understand the technical and cost-sharing issues that affect the 2015 budget. Several other directors of the owner district boards, Monument District Manager Mike Wicklund, Palmer Lake District Manager Becky Orcutt, and Woodmoor Assistant District Manager Randy Gillette also attended the meeting.

Final draft 2015 budget reviewed

No members of the public were present for this advertised and posted budget hearing. The open portion of public hearing closed without public comment.

Tri-Lakes facility Manager Bill Burks proposed a one-time pay raise for an operator to replace compensation for mandatory overtime performed over the past 10 years that will be going away in 2015 when another employee is hired after April. Strom and Ken Smith objected to replacing this regular and expected part of the operator's pay for a decade. Mandatory overtime was budgeted and spent the last 10 years to cover at least one and one-quarter hours of operator presence every weekend day as mandated by the federal Clean Water Act. Burks plans to create a flex time schedule with three staff operators to provide daily coverage within a 40-hour schedule for each of the three operators.

Wicklund noted that this one-time-only annual pay raise was \$2,291. After a lengthy defense of his proposal to the Woodmoor and Palmer Lake district directors and managers, Burks' pay raise request was cancelled at the direction

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