

Matching grant can help area residents reduce wildfire risk

Right: A “matching grant” partnership for fire fuels reduction is now available to residents across the Tri-Lakes and Palmer Divide area. Thanks to a 2015 grant agreement between the Coalition for the Upper South Platte (CUSP) and the Town of Palmer Lake, property owners who are ready and willing to do fuels mitigation now to reduce wildfire risk can have 50 percent of the costs paid for the grant funding when they pay or do in-kind work to pay for the other half, and when they sign contracts with CUSP. Property owners can schedule to get the actual work done with SWIFT (shown here), the Juniper Valley State Wildland Inmate Fire Team, one of several State of Colorado insured, licensed wildfire fighting 20-man crews currently under master contract with CUSP. The crew works with two on-site supervisors; the members of the crew have non-violent records and are usually eligible for parole, which they forego temporarily to be on the team. Judy Harrington, volunteer coordinator of the Palmer Lake/CUSP Fire Break Project, said that Tri-Lakes and Palmer Divide is not the only place SWIFT works for CUSP, “So if we don’t use them, we will lose them to other CUSP projects.” SWIFT is highly trained and experienced in fighting wildfires and thus well-informed about mitigation requirements of prevention in the WUI. The cost is \$1,000/acre/one day depending on terrain and density/type of vegetation, which is a break for grant participants



from SWIFT’s usual \$1,800 rate, according to Harrington. Residents interested in contracting with the SWIFT team can achieve this through Harrington and get on-site certification of completed work by CUSP Forester, or they may use private contractors and arrange for FireWise assessments by their local fire protection district prior to mitigation in order to qualify for the grant. Under new Colorado

fire mitigation tax law, out-of-pocket costs may be eligible for 2015 tax credit; check with tax preparers for details. This grant money will be paid on a first-come-first-served basis to residents who have completed all the requirements. See documents at www.townofpalmerlake.com or request them from Harrington at 719-229-9636 or judithreginaharrington@gmail.com. *Photo by Judith Harrington.*

Legacy Sertoma Honors Essay Winners; Presents Red Kettle Proceeds



Above: Legacy Sertoma annually sponsors an eighth-grade competition of essays written on the subject “What Freedom Means to Me.” This year, students of Monument Academy under the leadership of teacher Bekah Schneider participated, and the winners along with their parents were recently honored at a special dinner held at the Monument Hill Country Club. Shown, left to right, are Daniella Ferrante, first-place winner; Aidan Schneider, third place (tie); Carson Schlem, second place; eighth-grade teacher Bekah Schneider; and Emmajane Rankin, third place (tie). Daniella went on to represent the club and her school at the Pikes Peak Sertoma District National Heritage Banquet in Colorado Springs on Feb 18. *Photo courtesy Legacy Sertoma.*

Above: Legacy Sertoma President Jim Fitzpatrick, right, and Vice President of Sponsorship Dave Cooper, center, present a \$5,277 check to Salvation Army representative Dirk Lambert. That represented the total amount collected in the recent November-December Red Kettle Campaign conducted at the Monument Walgreen’s store. Legacy and the Salvation Army thank everyone who donated and made the campaign a big success. *Photo courtesy Legacy Sertoma.*

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