

Our Community News

Reporting on community issues in Monument, Palmer Lake, and the surrounding Tri-Lakes area.

Free



Issue #12a — Volume 2 Number 3 — Special Election Supplement — Monday, March 18, 2002

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Monument candidates

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Saturday, April 6th

Deadline: March 29th

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Our Community News

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volunteer Our Community News
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Editorial Content

Judy Barnes, Editor
481-4164

our_community_news@hotmail.com

Advertising

John Heiser, Advertising Editor
488-9031

our_community_ads@hotmail.com

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Our Community News

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Monument, Colorado 80132
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Tri-Lakes at the crossroads

Editorial by the OCN Staff

Municipal elections in Monument and Palmer Lake are especially significant this year. Because of the importance of these elections, the editorial board of *Our Community News* decided to publish this special election supplement to shed some light on the issues and to make our endorsements known to the voters.

In Palmer Lake, the candidates for town mayor and members of the board of trustees are running unopposed; however, there are five ballot measures to be considered. We comment on them later in this editorial.

ENDORSEMENT OF CANDIDATES FOR THE MONUMENT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

On April 2, Monument voters will select five of six positions on the Monument Board of Trustees, i.e., the town council. There are now seven candidates vying for five positions. The outcome of this election will determine Monument's direction for years to come. Moreover, the election is occurring at a critical time in which development is still thriving in the Tri-Lakes region despite a weak economy. Will the future be one of responsible planned growth, or will it be "growth at any cost" that creates huge infrastructure expenses ultimately borne by taxpayers?

A major issue facing the town is completion of the revised Monument Comprehensive Plan that will set forth guidelines for the future growth of the town. Monument needs a board of trustees that has the vision and willingness to analyze sensible alternatives and the courage to follow the best course to a sound future for the town and the surrounding area.

Based on our comprehensive coverage of Tri-Lakes area issues over the past nine months, we are offering our opinion to Monument voters at this critical juncture. Our 14-person editorial board, with more than one-third Monument voters, has considered each of the candidates running for town trustee; and endorses those listed below based on their past performance in office, where applicable, on their service to the community, and on their statements and positions on the issues. Candidates are listed in the order they appear on the Monument mail-in ballot.

BYRON GLENN



Byron Glenn, who has lived in Jackson Creek since April 1999, was elected to the board of trustees in the recall election last September. Byron previously served on the Monument planning commission. Byron has demonstrated thoughtfulness in examining issues, independence in reaching judgments about issues critical to the town, and a willingness to devote considerable time to town business. Byron Glenn should be returned to office.

KRISTI SCHUTZ



Kristi Schutz, a Monument resident since 1987 who lives in the West Oak Ridge development off Mitchell Avenue, has served the town as a trustee and on a variety of committees. She lost the September recall election by one vote. During her tenure as trustee, Kristi devoted much of her energy to the thoughtful consideration of responsible

'smart' growth. She was instrumental in casting deciding votes against such ill-advised development proposals as the K&C RV dealership proposed on land adjacent to the high school, and the Transit Mix concrete batch plant proposed for construction on North Washington Street not far from Safeway. [Despite misinformation being spread, the Wal-Mart proposal was never heard by the board and never came to a vote.] Kristi Schutz merits election again to the board of trustees.

W. LOWELL MORGAN



Like Kristi Schutz, "Skip" Morgan was recalled from office as a victim of organized opposition focused on issues largely unrelated to him or his performance in office. Skip, who has lived in the Tri-Lakes area since 1988 and in Monument for the past four years, is completely committed to the betterment of the town as evidenced by

his willingness to continue serving the town on the Planning Commission even after the recall election defeat. We believe the town needs trustees with intellect, resolve, and commitment... and Skip has them all. Skip Morgan, too, deserves to be elected again to the board.

CHRISTOPHER PERRY



Chris Perry, who has lived in the John Laing Homes development off Old Denver Highway for the past two years, was appointed to the board when vacancies went unfilled after the recall election. At the time, he was an unknown. But, since then, he has proved himself to be a welcome find, and, like Byron Glenn, a valuable representative of the newer, southern parts of

Monument. Chris has been especially adept at critically and carefully examining issues. We believe Chris Perry shows political maturity beyond his years; and he should be returned to office at this election.

(Continued on page 2)

AT THE CROSSROADS (Continued from page 1)

GEORGE BROWN



George Brown, who has lived in the Tri-Lakes area for six years and in the John Laing Homes development since April 2000, volunteered to serve as an appointed trustee following the September recall election. That he was not selected at that time merely attests to the rich field of candidates from

which the selections were made, not to any lack in George’s abilities. Based on our discussions with George and his past and present willingness to serve, we believe he will be an excellent addition to the board and should be elected.

In summary, all of these candidates have clearly demonstrated a willingness to put the best interests of the town first. They are a balanced representation of the various areas of the town, backgrounds, and points of view. We believe they merit each voter’s serious consideration and support.

As a concluding note, we feel obligated to reiterate that much has been made of the fact that two of the candidates endorsed above, W. Lowell (“Skip”) Morgan and Kristi Schutz, were removed from office at the special recall election in September. The sad truth is that the recall election was driven by slanderous, unsubstantiated claims originating from a few wealthy non-Monument residents some of whom stand to

make substantial financial gains at the expense of the town. It is stark evidence that misinformation and innuendo succeed all too well in the modern political environment.

To reduce the destructive impact of these intense negative campaigns, OCN is working hard to provide the accurate, objective information voters need to take a more active role in the decisions that affect everyone in the Tri-Lakes area.

PALMER LAKE BALLOT ISSUES
(Text of the ballot issues follows this editorial)

Palmer Lake has unspent funds most years as a result of cautious spending and the postponement of needed improvements and repairs. The Taxpayer Bill of Rights, or TABOR, amendment requires that excess money be returned to the taxpayers each year. The town must get permission from the voters in order to retain those unspent funds for use in the following year’s budget. Historically, the voters of Palmer Lake have always voted to retain excess revenue. Four of this year’s ballot issues are TABOR issues. Issues 1, 2, and 3 ask that the town be able to retain unspent funds from fiscal years 2001, 2002, and 2003. Each issue specifies what improvements the money will be applied toward. Issue 4 asks to be able to retain unspent funds from future years “for lawful municipal purposes.”

The fifth ballot issue seeks a 6-mill property tax levy to fund the volunteer fire department. Since a 4-mill sanitation district levy expires this year, the mill levy for the fire department will result in a 2-mill increase in property taxes. The Palmer Lake Volunteer Fire Department is now funded out of the Palmer Lake general fund at a rate of roughly \$40,000 per year. In comparison, the neighboring Tri-Lakes and Woodmoor-

Monument districts each have tax-financed budgets exceeding \$500,000 per year. The PLVFD is totally comprised of volunteers. But, however selfless their service, they cannot make up for the gross lack of resources available in the town budget for the vital emergency services provided by the department.

As a consequence, the town board placed a mill levy request on the ballot asking for six-mills for the town fire department. Some residents of the Forest View section of town, and four other houses near that subdivision, who are served and taxed by the Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District, believe the ‘dual’ taxation impact of the proposal, once by the town and once by the Tri-Lakes district, is unfair and should not be imposed.

While we have reservations about the impact of dual taxation on Forest View, we note that these residents are now taxed by Palmer Lake and, as a consequence, the PLVFD has an obligation to respond immediately to calls from the Forest View area just as they do to any other section of Palmer Lake, even though, at this time, Palmer Lake does not have an ‘automatic mutual aid’ agreement in effect with the Tri-Lakes district. In short, Forest View would appear to be getting its money’s worth. That notwithstanding, under current law, residents subject to dual taxation could eliminate the dual taxation by requesting that they be excluded from the Tri-Lakes district. Finally, even though the funds to be collected will not necessarily be placed in a separate account dedicated to funding emergency services, ballot issue 5 specifies the end use of the funds to be collected as being for the Palmer Lake Volunteer Fire Department.

We endorse all five ballot issues and urge their support by all Palmer Lake voters.

Text of the ballot issues

Issue 1-Retainage of Excess 2001 Fiscal Year Revenue

Shall the Town of Palmer Lake, Colorado, be allowed to retain and expend approximately \$42,806 in revenues from fiscal year 2001 which exceeds the revenue base under the Colorado Constitution, to be spent as a voter approved revenue change and shall these funds be used for the implementation and operation of the 800 Megahertz system, capital improvement repairs to the Vaile Library\Museum and Town Hall, to upgrade outdated ordinances and to supplement the basic service costs as funded by General Fund?

Issue 2-Retainage of Excess 2002 Fiscal Year Revenue

Shall the Town of Palmer Lake, Colorado, be authorized to collect, retain and expend the full amount of revenues generated from all sources during fiscal year 2002 to include non-federal grants and to be spent as a voter approved revenue change for the purpose of: Capital Improve-

ment Projects for Buildings, essential services, and as a supplement to the General Fund operating cost: not withstanding any State restrictions on fiscal year spending including the restrictions of Article X, Section 20 of the Colorado Constitution and 29-1-301(1)(a), C.R.S.?

Issue 3-Retainage of Excess 2003 Fiscal Year Revenue

Shall the Town of Palmer Lake be allowed to collect, retain and expend the full amount of revenues generated from all sources during fiscal year 2003 to include non-federal grants and to be spent as a voter approved revenue change for the purpose of Capital Improvement Projects for Buildings, Essential Services and as a supplement to the General Fund operating cost: not withstanding any State restrictions on fiscal year spending including the restrictions of Article X, Section 20 of the Colorado Constitution and 29-1-301(1)(A), C.R.S.?

Issue 4-Retainage of Excess Multiple Fiscal Year Revenue

Shall the Town of Palmer Lake, Colorado, without creating, increasing or adding any taxes of

any kind, be permitted to collect, retain and expend the full proceeds of the Town’s taxes, grants and other revenue for expenditure on lawful municipal purposes, not withstanding any State of Colorado restrictions of Article X, Section 20 of the Constitution of the State of Colorado?

Issue 5-Authorization of Palmer Lake Mills Levy for the Fire Department

Shall the Town of Palmer Lake, Colorado taxes be increased by approximately \$118,037 in the first fiscal year (2003) and annually thereafter in such amounts as are received each year by the imposition of an additional mill levy not to exceed six (6) mills upon taxable real property within the Town, commencing with tax collection year 2003, and continuing thereafter, such revenues to be collected, retained and spent for the purpose of defraying the operating expenses and Capital Improvements of the Palmer Lake Fire Department as a voter approved revenue change, and an exception to the limits which would otherwise apply under Article X, Section 20 of the Colorado Constitution or any other law?

Candidate Sidor withdraws after residency challenge rejected

By John Heiser

At a hearing Monday, March 11, conducted by Monument town clerk Anne Holliday, questions were raised about trustee candidate John Sidor’s residency. One of the qualifications to run for trustee is that the candidate be a resident of the town for at least the twelve months preceding the election. Although a local paper described him as having “lived in Monument for the past 17 years,” Sidor claims he has lived in Monument since December 2000. Prior to that he lived in Shiloh Pines. He is trustee for a trust that still owns the house in Shiloh Pines.

Candidate W. Lowell Morgan, who lives diagonally across the street from the house at 406 North Jefferson that Sidor claims is his residence, filed the objection. Neighbors of the Shiloh Pines residence say Sidor continues to come and go

from his Shiloh Pines residence just as he has over the years that he has lived there, and that his son continues to catch the school bus there. Since the neighbors were unable to attend the hearing, that evidence was not allowed.

During the hearing, Sidor presented considerable documentation that his wife Catherine has lived at 406 North Jefferson since December 2000; however, he reported that his drivers license and other documents bearing his name still show the Shiloh Pines address. Sidor presented a portion of a copy of a 2000 tax return form showing his name and listing the Jefferson address. The copy did not include a signature or date. Morgan noted that using tax software, it is possible to change an address and then reprint the form. Sidor said that he and his wife have lived together throughout their marriage.

According to Kathleen Harrington, the special counsel for the town clerk and an expert in municipal law, the statutes in this case place the burden of proof on the objector to prove that the person does not reside where he says. In her written decision and order, town clerk Holliday concluded that insufficient evidence was presented to prove that Sidor does not reside on Jefferson street, and so overruled the objection and ruled that Sidor be allowed to run for trustee.

In a surprise move following the announcement of the result, Sidor withdrew from the race, saying he had intended to withdraw ever since March 4 when he learned of the number of qualified candidates. He said he supports all the remaining candidates except Morgan and Kristi Schutz.

Monument "financial crisis" being manufactured for effect

Editorial by the OCN Staff

Despite considerable evidence to the contrary, claims continue to be made that the Town of Monument is facing a financial crisis. It would seem that those who raise this specter are doing so to justify turning the area into a "North Academy" type corridor of big box retail businesses.

The first step in this process was intended to be a Wal-Mart Supercenter on Baptist Road, across from King Soopers. When the town's public works committee requested improvements to Baptist Road to handle the anticipated increase in traffic, the Wal-Mart developer abandoned the project and is now pursuing it in the county. The Monument planning commission and board of trustees never voted on the project.

Wal-Mart has a history of this sort of "jurisdictional shopping" in which they pit one governmental entity against another in an effort to cut their costs while saddling taxpayers with the cost of the needed infrastructure.

While decrying imagined financial woes, some have criticized the long-overdue extension of Second Street to Highway 105 as a waste of the taxpayers' money. The present intersection at Third Street is a dangerous traffic snarl much of the day. The extension of Second Street has been planned for decades as the best solution to this problem.

Another important improvement is the extension of Beacon Lite Road south to connect to Old Denver Highway. When completed this will reroute the increasing traffic on Old Denver

Highway that presently winds its way through residential neighborhoods on the south side of the older part of Monument.

Despite the significant and courageous investments in Second Street and Beacon Lite Road, the town is not facing a financial crisis. Mayor Betty Konarski floated some numbers purporting to show such a problem, but backed off when challenged. "I think we are financially solvent and we'll stay that way if we pay attention to the books," Konarski was quoted as saying (*Tri-Lakes Tribune*, January 31, 2002).

While it is true that the current and past administrations have had difficulty obtaining accurate, timely, and complete financial reports, still there is ample evidence that the town finances are solidly based on growing revenues and controlled expenditures. The town has demonstrated fiscal responsibility by having put more money in the bank over the last few years than in the prior ten years. This money should be invested in the town to provide services for the residents.

According to the last three financial audits, the town had in its 16 accounts in the local Peoples Bank, the local Wells Fargo Bank, and the Colorado Investment known as Colortrust, a total of the following amounts:

On December 31, 1998:	\$2,131,090
On December 31, 1999:	\$2,957,661
On December 31, 2000:	\$3,493,694
On December 31, 2001:	\$3,517,785

Note that the last figure was from the latest financial report of March 2002.

In addition, the board of trustees lowered the mill levy (property tax) from 7.5 to 7.0 for 2001 and from 7.0 to 6.4 for 2002. Examining these facts we can only conclude that the town has not been deficit spending over the past three years and that the governing body is confident enough of its future revenues that it can lower the mill levy for two consecutive years. To pay for the Monument Lake Dam repairs, the town is cost-sharing the project with El Paso County and will receive a low-interest loan from the state. For Monument's road projects, the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments will provide \$200,000 for 2nd Street and the Triview Metropolitan District will pay up to \$75,000 toward the cost to construct Jackson Creek Parkway from Highway 105 to Higby Road, providing a new road to Lewis-Palmer High School after CDOT constructs the new 105/I-25 interchange. Out-of-pocket expenses should be less than \$250,000 for all these road projects.

The Town of Monument has ample financial reserves and can continue the many needed capital investments such as Monument Dam repair, road construction, and water system improvements, knowing it can honor its commitments to its citizens and the construction firms it employs to do the work.

Next time you hear someone claiming the town is about to go broke, consider the motivation of the source for these claims, and who will gain the most financially by whatever solution they argue is urgently needed to fix the situation.

Letters to Our Community

THE WRONG WAY, THE RIGHT WAY AND THE PALMER LAKE WAY

The present Town Council of Palmer Lake seems determined to do things to the detriment of the citizens of Palmer Lake, the very people they have sworn an oath to serve.

In August, the Palmer Lake Town Council voted to terminate their Automatic Mutual Aid Agreement with the Tri-Lakes Fire Department. This agreement had been in effect for over nine years and the citizens of Palmer Lake had benefited from having Tri-Lakes fire equipment and twenty-four-hour per day, seven-day per week fire fighters available to assist the Palmer Lake volunteers. But that agreement is now history.

By terminating the Auto-Aid agreement the Palmer Lake Town Council has also denied the service of the Palmer Lake Volunteer Fire Department to those Palmer Lake residents that are primarily served by the Tri-Lakes Fire Department, although those citizens continue to pay for Palmer Lake Volunteer Fire Department protection through their taxes.

In November of last year, the Palmer Lake Fire Chief delivered a letter to the Tri-Lakes Fire Chief stating that Palmer Lake was also severing its ties with Tri-Lakes Fire Department for emergency medical and ambulance service. The Palmer Lake Town Council had decided that the citizens of Palmer Lake could be better served by ambulance service from Larkspur. Palmer Lake citizens responded with a storm of protest and the Council relented, temporarily continuing the association with Tri-Lakes. In January members of the Palmer Lake Town Council met with Directors of the Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District. The Palmer Lake Town Council members submitted a list of 16 conditions; all but two of these were summarily dismissed by Tri-

Lakes. The remaining two (which were already being done) were periodic review of the service by the two fire chiefs and that Tri-Lakes would share periodic medical training with Palmer Lake volunteers. The meeting ended in an unsuccessful shouting match. Larkspur proved not to be a viable solution to the problem, but thanks to the effort of Palmer Lake Police Chief, Dale Smith, and retired Palmer Lake fireman, Duane Hanson as a mediator, negotiations have been on-going between the two fire chiefs. Essentially the same agreement that was in force last November has now, in late February, been signed by the two fire chiefs and the citizens of Palmer Lake will continue to receive emergency medical and ambulance service from Tri-Lakes, thus ending the turmoil caused by the Town Council.

Now, the Palmer Lake Town Council has placed on the April municipal election ballot a measure to add a six-mil tax levy "FOR PALMER LAKE FIRE DEPARTMENT." The way the ballot issue is presented proves that there are still three ways to do things in Palmer Lake—a wrong way—a right way—and the Palmer Lake way. The wrong way would be to continue to under-fund the Palmer Lake Fire Department from the Town's general fund. The right way would be to create a Special Improvement District so that the added tax money would go directly to the fire department without being commingled with the other general fund money of the Town. A newly created Palmer Lake Fire Protection District could also have boundaries that match the boundaries of the Tri Lakes Fire Protection District so that there would be no gaps and no overlaps. But no, the Palmer Lake Town Council has chosen to make this additional tax levy a general fund tax measure, meaning that this Town Council, or any future Town Council, can budget and spend the money for any purpose they choose; for the fire department or any other

department. And those Palmer Lake residents who happen to live in the Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District, would now pay double for fire protection. These are the same citizens who are now denied the service of the Palmer Lake Fire Department because the Palmer Lake Town Council terminated the Automatic Mutual Aid agreement with Tri-Lakes. Are these the only Palmer Lake residents who will suffer if this tax measure passes? Absolutely not. All citizens of Palmer Lake will suffer, because this encroachment with its double tax implications and no fire protection has infuriated the Palmer Lake residents in the Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District and will probably dash any hopes of ever renewing the Automatic Mutual Aid Agreement with Tri-Lakes, which could have been beneficial to all Palmer Lake residents.

The ironic thing is that this Palmer Lake Town Council has taken all these actions while the Town of Palmer Lake, The Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District and the Woodmoor-Monument Fire Protection District are all participating in a jointly funded study aimed at defining the area's future needs for emergency services and for ways to achieve greater cooperation between the three fire departments. The "Comment Draft" of the study report is now available and the final report is expected in mid-April. If the Palmer Lake Town Council had waited until the November general election to submit their increased tax levy measure they would have had the benefit of the findings and recommendations of the study, including recommended funding levels, no one knows if six-mils is the correct number or not. And they would also have the time to define a Palmer Lake Fire Protection District. In other words, they could have done it right, for a change.

Charlie Pocock

(Response from Mayor McDonald on page 4)

LETTERS (Continued from page 3)

RESPONSE FROM PALMER LAKE
MAYOR MCDONALD

This letter is in response to a letter that appeared in the *Tribune* titled, “The right way, the wrong way and the Palmer Lake way.” [printed above] I would like to set the record straight on a few issues, and since the *Tribune* will not print a letter from me, I am writing to *OCN*.

The reasons the Palmer Lake Town Council voted to have the mill levy question on the April ballot without forming a special fire district are as follows: We did not have enough time to form a special district for the April ballot and we know in later upcoming elections citizens will be asked for funding for other things. We fully intend to ask the citizens to form a special “Fire District” in the November election. However, if this is voted down now we will again bring the mill levy for a Fire District before the voters in November.

Mr. Pocock, I would like to ask you a question. When you and I spoke you told me that you would support this issue on the November ballot. Was that just another smoke screen? The only difference is that we are asking for the funding before we form the Fire District. This way we will know we have the money for a district rather than a district that is not funded. Oh yes, and for the record, the Town Council did NOT vote to withdraw auto aid.

As far as Forest View residents being doubled taxed, that could only happen if citizens voted for the mill levy and turned down the “Fire District.” Since they already pay about seven mills to Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District, they would not also have to pay a mill levy to the Palmer Lake Fire District. Also, I would like to set the record straight; the only time PLVFD does not respond in Forest View is if they are told not to by Tri-Lakes Fire.

Mr. Pocock commented that with the consolidation talks going on, this was premature.

I do not agree. If the citizens and fire departments believe that one consolidated fire department is the best way to go, then Palmer Lake residents would HAVE to pay a mill levy to the consolidated district to get coverage. If Palmer Lake citizens decide not to consolidate, then what? Our fire department would again be dependent on the general fund. I don’t know where Mr. Pocock was during our budget meetings, but each department (except fire) had

to cut their budget by 20%. All I know is that out of my \$1,571 tax bill, the town only receives \$376, which is split by fire, police, roads and their staffs along with the entire office staff. Okay, so maybe you think, let’s disband the PLVFD, we can use the money elsewhere. Well that would mean that we in Palmer Lake would have no fire protection. Remember, Tri-Lakes gets seven mills from its residents and Woodmoor-Monument gets about 9.5 mills. So we would have to pay someday! If we do consolidate, we may have to pay a little higher than the 6 mills we are asking for now but it would not be much more. Whether we consolidate or not, wouldn’t it be nice to have a substation on the east side of the lake as well as a part-time staffed fire department?

The decision is the voters, and that is where it should be. Just remember, if it doesn’t pass now you will see it again. We need to support our volunteers. They are highly trained professionals (with only a couple hundred hours less than Tri-Lakes) who put their lives on the line for us. Let us show how much we appreciate and support them! They need updated equipment and supplies as well as help paying for the new fire truck (so far we have not been able to get a grant), and \$25,000 a year out of \$40,000 budget is rough. At least we can be assured this truck will start if you or I need it.

Nikki McDonald
Mayor, Town of Palmer Lake

TRIVIEW METRO DISTRICT ISSUES

Jackson Creek residents have expressed growing concerns about the questionable financial underpinning of the Triview Metropolitan District that provides water, sewer, and other services in their area. The metro district's board of directors raised the mill levy from 20 to 25 last fall and has approved a massive debt increase of \$6 million according to Triview attorney Peter Susemihl’s statement at the February 28 board meeting.

Many of us who are familiar with local governmental law question how you can raise the mill levy and increase debt without a vote of the people. Further, according to the past two Triview audits, the district has been deficit spending in both years and increasing the indebtedness of the district one million dollars each year, all without a vote by the taxpaying residents of Jackson Creek. How can this be and how long can this go on?

These issues are not with the Monument board of trustees, who are being elected by mail-in ballot on April 2, but with the special district government of the Triview Metropolitan District, whose election of two board members is being held the first Tuesday in May. Several residents are running for the Triview board and deserve the support of the residents of Jackson Creek.

Let us now turn to the history of the Wal-Mart supercenter proposal. The agents of Wal-Mart presented a proposal to the Town of Monument two years ago. They stated they would do anything the town requested. The town asked them to pay their fair share of their project’s impact on the community. This involved upgrading the bridge and Baptist Road between I-25 and the King Soopers shopping center traffic light. At that point, Wal-Mart put the project on hold. The Monument board of trustees never voted on the Wal-Mart proposal.

Wal-Mart then went to the county to see if they could avoid paying any costs for road upgrades or alternatively could get reimbursed for any costs they might incur. The question we as taxpayers should ask, “Do we need to subsidize Wal-Mart’s development in our community?”

Finally, the Triview board voted to pay \$15,000 of district taxpayers’ money for a Wal-Mart water availability study for land not within their district in order to enable Wal-Mart to keep open its county option at the expense of Monument sales tax revenues.

If what Triview attorney Pete Susemihl says is true, then the current debt of this district now exceeds 18 million dollars, requiring at least \$2 million of debt service (principal and interest) per year, yet according to the 2000 audit, the Triview district collected less than \$1 million in revenues and operations cost nearly a million. When does this house of cards collapse? We can be sure the ENRON stockholders would have liked an answer to a similar question before its collapse.

Voters need to know that none of the people on the Monument board past or present are in any way responsible for the Triview metro districts’ financial problems. These are the responsibility of the Triview metro board members, none of whom live in the district or even hold a deed for property in it, but have voted massive debt increases, more property taxes, and higher water/sewer service fees. When does this taxation without representation end?

Leon Tenney

All ballots are due April 2

MONUMENT BALLOTS

This is the first Monument election to be accomplished entirely using mail-in ballots. Ballots are required by law to be mailed by the clerk to all registered Monument voters between March 8 and 18. If you are a Monument voter and you do not receive your ballot by March 19, please contact Monument town clerk, Anne

Holliday, at Monument town hall, 481-2954.

Ballots may be mailed or hand delivered to town hall.

All ballots must be received at the Monument town hall no later than 7 pm on Tuesday, April 2. Monument Town Hall is located at 166 Second Street.

Be sure your vote is counted: Mail your ballot early!

PALMER LAKE BALLOTS

Palmer Lake ballots must be cast at the Palmer Lake Town Hall between 7 am and 7 pm on April 2.

Palmer Lake Town Hall is located at 54 Valley Crescent. For further information, contact the Palmer Lake town clerk, Della Gins, at 481-2953.

Our Community Calendar Highlights

- **Open House on the Baptist Road Improvement Project**, Mon., Mar. 18, 5 pm to 7 pm, Lewis-Palmer High School. This will examine recommended improvements for Baptist Road. Info: call Maryam Babaki, 303-444-2013.
- **Monument Board of Trustees Meeting**, Mon., Mar. 18, 6:30 pm, Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd St. Info: call 481-2954.
- **El Paso County Planning Commission**, Tue., Mar. 19, 9 am, 27 E. Vermijo, 3rd Floor Hearing Rm. Info: 520-6300. Hay Creek Ranch hearing.
- **I-25 Corridor Environmental Impact Open House**, Wed., Mar. 20, 4-7 pm, Lewis-Palmer High School. Info: Doug Eberhart, 520-5800.
- **Palmer Lake Planning Commission Meeting**, Wed., Mar. 20, 7 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 54 Valley Crescent. Info: call 481-2953 or visit www.ci.palmer-lake.co.us.
- **Woodmoor-Monument Fire Protection District Board Meeting**, Mon., Mar. 25, 9 am, 1855 Woodmoor Drive. Info: call 488-3303.
- **Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District Board Meeting**, Tue., Mar. 26, 7 pm, conference room at Station 1 on Highway 105 west of Monument near the bowling alley. Info: call 481-2312.
- **Triview Metropolitan District Board Meeting**, Thu., Mar. 28, 8:30 am, District Office, 174 North Washington St. Info: call 488-6868.
- **The Friends of Ben Lomond Mountain**, Thu., Mar. 28, 7 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 54 Valley Crescent. Info: 481-2474.
- **Ballots Due**, Tue, Apr. 2, 7 pm. Info: See above.
- **Monument Board of Trustees Meeting**, Mon., Apr. 1, 6:30 pm, Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd St. Info: call 481-2954.
- **High School Future Configuration**, Tue., Apr. 2, 7 pm, Lewis-Palmer High School. Info: call 488-4700.
- **El Paso County Water Authority**, Wed., Apr. 3, 9 am, 27 E. Vermijo, 3rd Floor Hearing Room. Info: 520-6300.
- **Monument Public Works Committee**, Wed., Apr. 3, 6:30 pm, Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd St. Info: call 481-2954.
- **Palmer Lake Town Council Workshop**, Thu., Apr. 4, 7 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 54 Valley Crescent. Info: call 481-2953.