

Happy New Year from the All-Volunteer Staff of

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Our Community News

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

Issue #22 — Volume 3 Number 1 — Saturday, January 4, 2003

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Monument Hill Sertoma and Serteens collected over \$26,000 for the Salvation Army



LPHS Serteens Bethany Prosseda and Jeff Aschenbrenner rang the bell at Safeway on Sunday, Dec. 22 with help from Bethany's sister, Olivia, on the left.

Thank you, Tri-Lakes residents

*By Eddie Kinney, 2002 Bell Ringer Chairman
Monument Hill Sertoma*

I would like to thank all of the residents of the Tri-Lakes area that made this Salvation Army Christmas Holiday Bell Ringing a huge success. It is good to see that this area has not forgotten how to care about people less fortunate than themselves. You, the men, women and children of the Tri Lakes area who opened your hearts and pocketbooks to an amazing amount of over \$26,000, I thank you!

The managers of Safeway (Russ Novotny and Doug

Jones) and King Soopers (Ken Howell and Butch Quigley) made all this possible by allowing the Monument Hill Sertoma to ring bells at their locations.

Members of the Monument Hill Sertoma, Lewis-Palmer High School Serteens and eight area volunteers contributed 450 hours of bell-ringing at these locations. Thank you all for your outstanding support.

I would also like to thank Sam De Felice and Mike Wicklund, who each day picked up the contributions, counted the money and deposited it in the bank. Your help was deeply appreciated.

Again thank you all!

Revised plan for Struthers Ranch approved despite opposition from neighbors and the planning commission

By John Heiser

In late August 2002, landowners near the Struthers Ranch parcel were notified that an amended sketch plan has been submitted for that parcel. The parcel occupies 107.4 acres and lies east of I-25, south of the Chaparral Hills, west of Gleneagle, and north of the Academy View and Summer Glen Estates developments. It is currently zoned RR-2, rural residential, 2.5 acre minimum lot size that would allow about 40 single-family lots.

On October 15, 2002, the county planning commission unanimously recommended denial of the revised sketch plan. Planning Commissioner Joe Salute said, "There is inadequate density transition."

On December 19, a hearing on the sketch plan was

held before the board of county commissioners. Commissioner Duncan Bremer, commissioner for District 1 covering the northern part of the county including the site of the proposed project, was on a skiing trip. At the conclusion of the hearing, the board unanimously approved postponing a vote on the project until Bremer could review the recording of the hearing and participate in the vote.

On January 2, by a vote of 3-2 the board of county commissioners approved the revised plan. Commissioners Bremer, Chuck Brown, and Ed Jones voted in favor. Commissioners Tom Huffman and Jeri Howells were opposed.

(Continued on page 2)

Look for our next issue

Saturday, February 1

Ad Deadline: Wed., Jan. 22

Letter Deadline: Fri., Jan. 24

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STRUTHERS RANCH (Continued from page 1)

Background

The prior Struthers Ranch sketch plan proposed 50 single-family lots on the north side of the parcel, 75 multi-family units on the south side of the parcel, 13.5 acres of office, and 30.2 acres of open space.

Water and sewer service to Struthers Ranch is proposed to be supplied by the Donala Water and Sanitation District that serves Gleneagle. On September 19, 2000, by a vote of 7-2, the County Planning Commission recommended denial of the Struthers Ranch request for a waiver from the county's 300-year water availability rule. During the course of the hearing, Dana Duthie manager of the Donala district stated that the district might have as little as 30 years and probably no more than 156 years of water available to be pumped. On October 26, 2000, the Board of County Commissioners unanimously approved the request for a waiver from the 300-year rule. This action cleared the way for submission of the sketch plan.

On November 21, 2000, by a vote of 8-1, the County Planning Commission recommended approval of the Struthers Ranch Sketch Plan. That recommendation for approval was subject to conditions and notations including requirements that a) Any residential lots on the north boundary must be a minimum size of one-acre and must include at least a one hundred foot setback from the common property line with the Chaparral Hills Subdivision, b) No access through platted road easements in Chaparral Hills were to be allowed, and c) Residential lots in on the north side of the drainage swale must be at least one-half acre in size.

On January 18, 2001, the Board of County Commissioners unanimously approved the Struthers Ranch Sketch Plan but added a condition that the lots on the north side could not be developed until an access north to Baptist Road was available. The latter requirement seemingly stalled the project.

The New Proposal

The revised sketch plan replaces the 75 multi-family units in the south with 75 single-family lots. 113 lots replace the 50 lots on the north side of the prior plan. The total of 188 single-family residential lots would have a minimum size of 6,000 square feet and an average size of 7,000 square feet. The plan also includes 42.8 acres of landscape buf-

fer, open space, drainage detention, and habitat conservation areas; 5.7 acres of Struthers Road; and approximately nine acres of Planned Business Center commercial use.

Representing Struthers Ranch Development, LLC, land planner David Jones argued that taking advantage of the terrain and limiting some lots to single story houses, the increased density would not significantly impact views from adjacent lots.

Jones said the economics of the project would not work with less than 113 lots in the north part of the parcel because the developer will be required by the county to participate in the cost of constructing three-quarters of a mile of Jackson Creek Parkway-Struthers Road. He said, "We cannot pay for that off-site construction with 50 lots. Period. It is just impossible. We are going to have to walk away from it. With 113 lots, we can come close."

Jones' calculation of the number of lots needed to pay for off-site construction was based on an assumption that the county will pay for a bridge over the Black Forest Creek drainage swale and mouse habitat that bisects the parcel. That bridge is estimated to cost as much as \$2 million. According to Carl Schueler, assistant director of the county planning department, the funding request to cover the bridge will be considered in 2003.

Numerous opponents

Falcon's Nest resident Carla Howerton said, "The property is zoned for 2.5 acre lots and that would be perfectly fine with us." She presented a petition with 65 signatures. Her husband Bill said that 100% of the neighbors are adamantly opposed to the revised sketch plan and signed the petition. He expressed concern for traffic safety and the danger to the many children in the area saying, "Make [the developer] put in another ingress for crying out loud. Some kid is going to get hurt." Noting that the planning commission unanimously voted for denial, he said, "That says something. Make [the developer] go back to the drawing board."

Steve Sery, a member of the planning commission and owner of an adjoining Chaparral Hills lot said, "I am disappointed that Duncan [Bremer] is not here, especially since he is the commissioner for this area." Sery said that many of the current residents were told that if the Struthers Ranch property were developed, it would be with 2.5-acre lots. He said, "Before I bought, I checked with the planning department. It is not unreasonable to expect something less than a 370% increase from the original zoning." He noted that the revised sketch plan is a 50% increase in the number of lots over the previously approved 125-lot plan.

Sery added, "It is not the responsibility of the board of county commissioners to make sure a developer can make a profit. That is a business risk they should have figured out before they came before you the first time. What if this doesn't work out? Are they going to come back for another 50 lots? You did your job last time and I don't think you should be asked to do it again just because the developer either can't make money with the prior plan or sees a way to make more."

Sery later added that even if there are changes to the plan later in the process, approval of the sketch plan will establish the number of lots allowed.

Chaparral Hills resident Greg Dillon added, "That road is going to cost more than they think."

Chris Anderson, also a Chaparral Hills lot owner, summarized the concerns of many on the north side of the project when he criticized the lack of an adequate transition from five-acre lots

(Continued on page 3)

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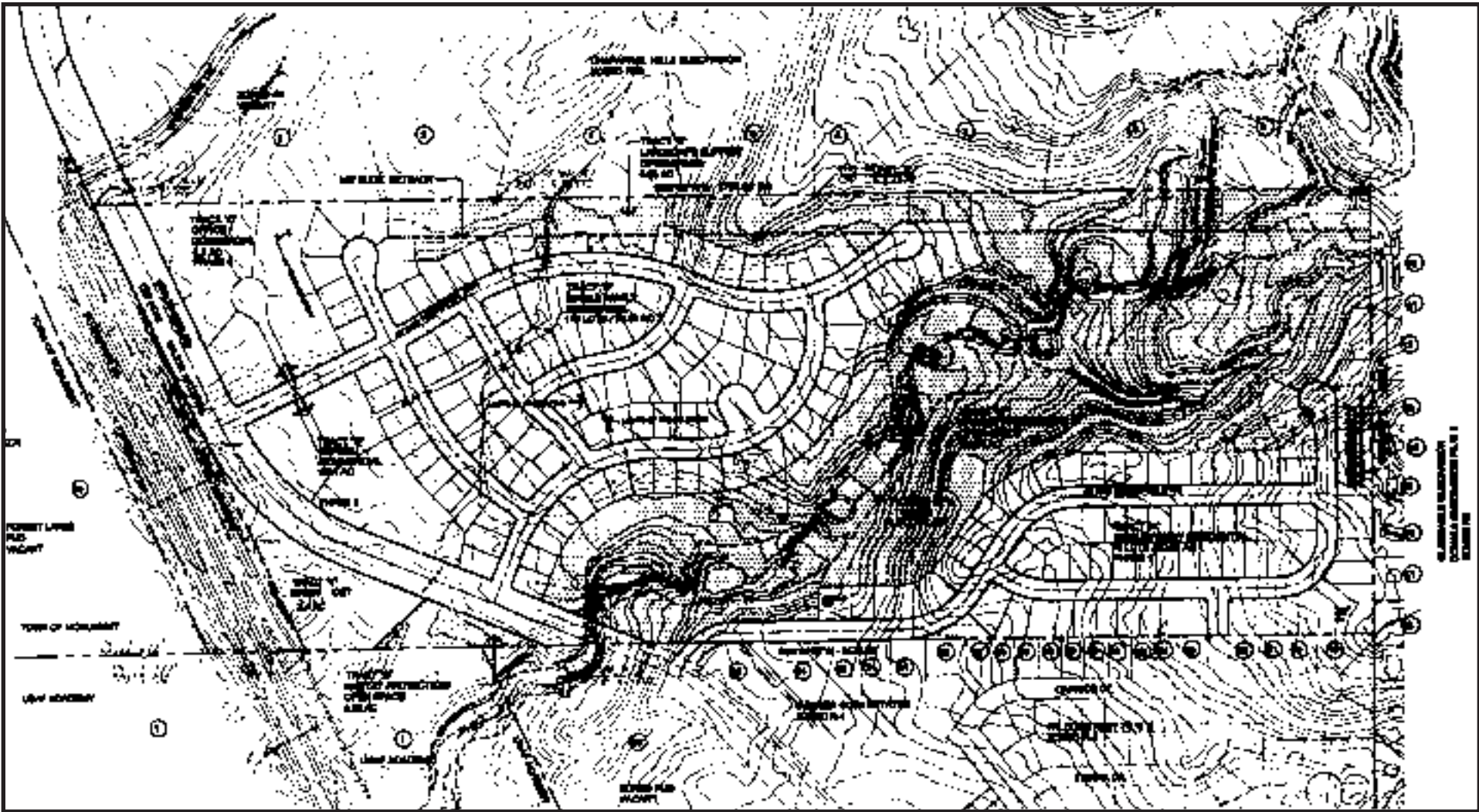


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STRUTHERS RANCH (Continued from page 2)

in Chaparral Hills to a density of six lots per acre in Struthers Ranch. He said, “Let’s look at what is good for the community. They need to come up with a transition like you have tried to lead them to do.”

Chaparral Hills resident Dana Kwist said, “When I purchased my land in the early 90’s, Mrs. Struthers used to have picnics and spoke of this being developed as horse habitat. The encroachment on what was to be a horse place has been incredible. You did your work last time. You were very, very generous. Where is this going to stop?”

Gleneagle resident Jim Schwindt expressed concerns about glare from headlights with the close proximity between I-25 and Struthers Road-Jackson Creek Parkway. He also said, “The fine folks of Gleneagle are giving their water to this area.” Commissioner Brown said that concerns about water would be addressed later in the process.

Gleneagle resident Ron Overson said, “They have a lack of concern for the forested areas. To have a tree is a precious commodity. It doesn’t sound like they are going to be able to save any of the trees.” He also expressed concern about drainage issues and added, “There is no play area for the youngsters.”

Jay Lambdon who lives to the east of Struthers Ranch described “canyons” created by storm water and said that more than \$1 million will be needed to correct drainage from Gleneagle across this property. Connie Lambdon added, “This is our retirement home. It has that openness and birds and animals that we wanted. Then this is coming in on us.” She said she works for school district 20 and expressed concern about school overcrowding saying, “Students are stuffed into every room.”

Gleneagle resident Susanne Dempsey said, “I will have four houses backed up right to my backyard.” She said the lots to the east of the project are a minimum of 15,000 sq. ft. compared to the proposed 6,000 sq. ft. lots in Struthers Ranch. She said, “This project will have a very negative impact to the community and the wildlife in our area. Within a few years with all the house cats, those Preble’s mice will be gone.” Commissioner Huffman quipped, “Don’t get me all excited.”

County process

Barry Holmes, county planner for the project, described the sketch plan as a concept review. He said, “We have certainly identified some issues with this proposal.” He added, “Often the sketch plan is referred back to in subsequent stages. Many of the more precise aspects including almost all the en-

gineering elements such as street design, grading, drainage will be resolved later.” He said, “This is a very complex piece of property from the standpoint of land use and access. There are major drainage questions along this drainage way that are not the responsibility of this owner but will impact this property.” Those drainage problems would presumably have to be corrected by the county at taxpayer expense if this project goes forward.

Vote postponed

Commissioner Jones said, “Commissioner Bremer for some reason went skiing today.” He then made a motion to postpone the vote on the proposal until January 2. The motion was unanimously approved.

The Vote

When the board reconvened January 2, Bremer made the motion for approval after adding several additional conditions including 50’ setbacks from the east property line and limiting the total number of lots to 180. He said, “I see it as a reasonable accommodation for the neighbors.”

Commissioner Brown said, “We need to accommodate affordable housing. It is a necessary evil that we have to live with.”

County attorney Michael Lucas noted that since the sketch plan differs significantly from the one for which a waiver of the 300-year water availability rule was granted, another waiver will be required. Ken Rowberg, director of county planning, said that would be addressed at the preliminary plan stage since it was not included in the public notice for the sketch plan hearings.

Commissioners Bremer, Brown, and Jones voted for the motion. Commissioners Howells and Huffman voted against it. The motion passed 3-2.

The next step in the process is submission of a preliminary plan which would be heard by the planning commission and board of county commissioners.

The planning consultant on the project is David F. Jones, Land Resource Associates, 9736 Mountain Rd., Chipita Park, Colorado 80809, (719) 684-2298, FAX (719) 684-8413.

For more information on this and other projects within the county, contact the planning department at 520-6300 or visit www.elpasoco.com/planning. You may submit comments or questions to the El Paso County Planning Department, 27 E. Vermijo Avenue, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80903.

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County commissioners approve eminent domain for Milam Road extension

By John Heiser

On December 16, the board of county commissioners voted 4-1 to commence condemnation proceedings to acquire an 80-foot right-of-way easement immediately west of the southernmost 80 acres of Black Forest Regional Park. Commissioners Duncan Bremer, Chuck Brown, Ed Jones, and Tom Huffman voted in favor. Commissioner Jeri Howells was opposed.

The use of eminent domain to obtain land for the extension of Milam Road north of Shoup Road comes as a result of the October 12, 2001 ruling by Colorado Fourth Judicial District Court Judge Kirk S. Samelson: "The proposed extension of Milam Road through the park property for access to the King's Deer development ... is prohibited." The suit was brought against El Paso County by the Friends of Black Forest Regional Park (FOBFRP) to block the extension of Milam Road through the park. The extension would provide access to the 161-lot Cathedral Pines project proposed to be built immediately north of the park by King's Deer developer Dan

Potter. The county has appealed Judge Samelson's ruling.

In 1999, the county acquired the park's southern-most 80-acre tract of land from the federal government subject to a federal law called the Sisk Act that allows federal land to be conveyed to state, county or city government only if its use does not change. The deed required the county to use the property as a recreational park. Judge Samelson concluded, "...the primary purpose for the proposed Milam Road extension through the park property would be for access to the King's Deer [Cathedral Pines] development. As such, the proposed road would not be utilizing the park property for purposes for which the park was being used prior to ... 1999."

In earlier findings in the case, Samelson ruled that no road easements exist along the section line on the western edge of the park. Potter had claimed that if the road through the park was denied he could use existing easements to build a road straight up the section line near several residences.

According to Ken Rowberg, director of the county planning department, at this point, the only way to obtain road easements along the section line would be for the county commissioners to use eminent domain to purchase them from the owners of the adjacent land. The action by the commissioners on December 16 started that process.

The condemnation includes portions of properties south of Shoup Road to enable alignment with existing Milam Road. In all, fourteen separate easements are to be acquired from ten property owners for a total of 7.5 acres.

The commissioners authorized up to \$200,000 in county legal expenses associated with the action. According to Bill Lewis, assistant county attorney, additional funds may be needed. The property owners whose land is sought must pay their own attorney fees associated with the eminent domain negotiation and any related court action.

According to Lewis, King's Deer development will purchase the land and construct the road. King's Deer contributed an initial \$25,000 and is expected to provide an additional \$105,000.

Lewis said the public purpose was demonstrated by the approval of the Cathedral Pines plan by the county planning commission and board of county commissioners. The approved plan is dependent on construction of the Milam Road extension. Lewis also cited improved access to the existing park and to the 208-acre expansion of the park included as part of the Cathedral Pines project.

Without the extension of Milam Road, the Cathedral Pines project would have to be redesigned to use available access points to several surrounding roads. Many of those roads are in poor repair and in need of design improvements. Nearby residents are concerned that the additional traffic generated by the subdivision would create a hazardous situation on those roads and diminish their quality of life. Improvements to those roads would likely be a condition for approval of the redesigned project.

Attorney Ken Sparks appeared representing FOBFRP. He said, "It is a very special power you have to take away private property and use it for a public purpose. I don't see anything in the [Colorado] Constitution that says you can sell the right of condemnation to the highest bidder. But for the development and the developer's cash, you would not be involved in

(Continued on page 5)



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MILAM ROAD (Continued from page 4)

this condemnation. It is not equitable, not fair, and probably illegal. It is a delegation of a sacred power to a private party. Incidental public use of the road doesn't control over whether this is a taking [of private property rights]. Case law says that if you have other access, you have no right to condemn."

Sparks questioned the urgency of the action. He said, "The timing is dictated by the developer. Where is the compelling public reason? There is clear private reason to not miss another selling season." He added, "People are talking about the budget issue. All of a sudden you can find \$200,000."

Sparks also objected to the notification regarding this action. He said the affected landowners had no notice of the hearing until December 13.

Cynthia Miller, a resident on Darr Drive, said, "I found out about this last Saturday [Dec. 14]. You want to take 1.5 acres, which is almost one-third of my property. How angry would you be to lose one-third of your property? It sounds like business as usual. What developers want, developers get." Referring to the residents' success in court against the county, she said, "This feels like a punitive action."

Dennis Immer, a Milam Road resident, said, "This is an incorrect use of the power you have been entrusted with. It has reduced my faith in my elected officials."

Chris Rodacy, another Milam Road resident, said, "You are putting a road right next to my house. Imagine it is you and your land. Who is going to pay for the decreased value of my land?" He also said that power lines and gas lines must be relocated and rerouting Milam Road to the west will create safety issues.

Clinton Finney, who lives on the southwest corner of Shoup and Milam, said, "The road will be 10 feet from my garage. My grandfather bought this property. You will be removing the most important part, the treed portion, of my property."

Michael Merrifield, recently elected Democratic representative for Colorado House District 18, asked, "Why is there a necessity to work with developers rather than constituents? This shows arrogance and a lack of concern for the voters." Citing the short notification, he vowed to support legislation to "ensure this doesn't happen again."

Commissioner Bremer responded, "We are very much in touch with the people. The property was posted a week ago. Only 24-hour notice is required."

Merrifield replied, "It is obvious the board has made up its mind."

Amy Phillips, representing the Black Forest Land Use Committee, said a majority of area residents have said putting the road through the park is the better solution [than using the other access roads]. I think you ought to postpone a decision until after the appeal is decided. Why is it so important to rush and do this? You are not forced to do this now. Let the judicial process play itself out." Bremer responded, "The wheels of justice grind very slowly. In my opinion, the appeal will refer the matter back to the trial court. Even if the county wins after all that, I don't see that we are going to get certainty that we can use out of the appeal. I am very troubled about waiting. The county winds up with an uncertain ability to use the land east of the section line."

Jim Lockhart of the Pikes Peak Sierra Club, said, "Why are we rushing to judgment on this? Why can't people be given proper notice? You are

\$750,000 short on the parks budget and now you have \$200,000 to spend on this condemnation." Bremer replied, "The money is coming from the road and bridge fund, which can't be spent on parks."

Bremer cited as an advantage the arrangement with King's Deer saying, "This is a private source for money rather than having the public pay for it. It doesn't have to come from taxpayer's money for us to go forth and acquire land."

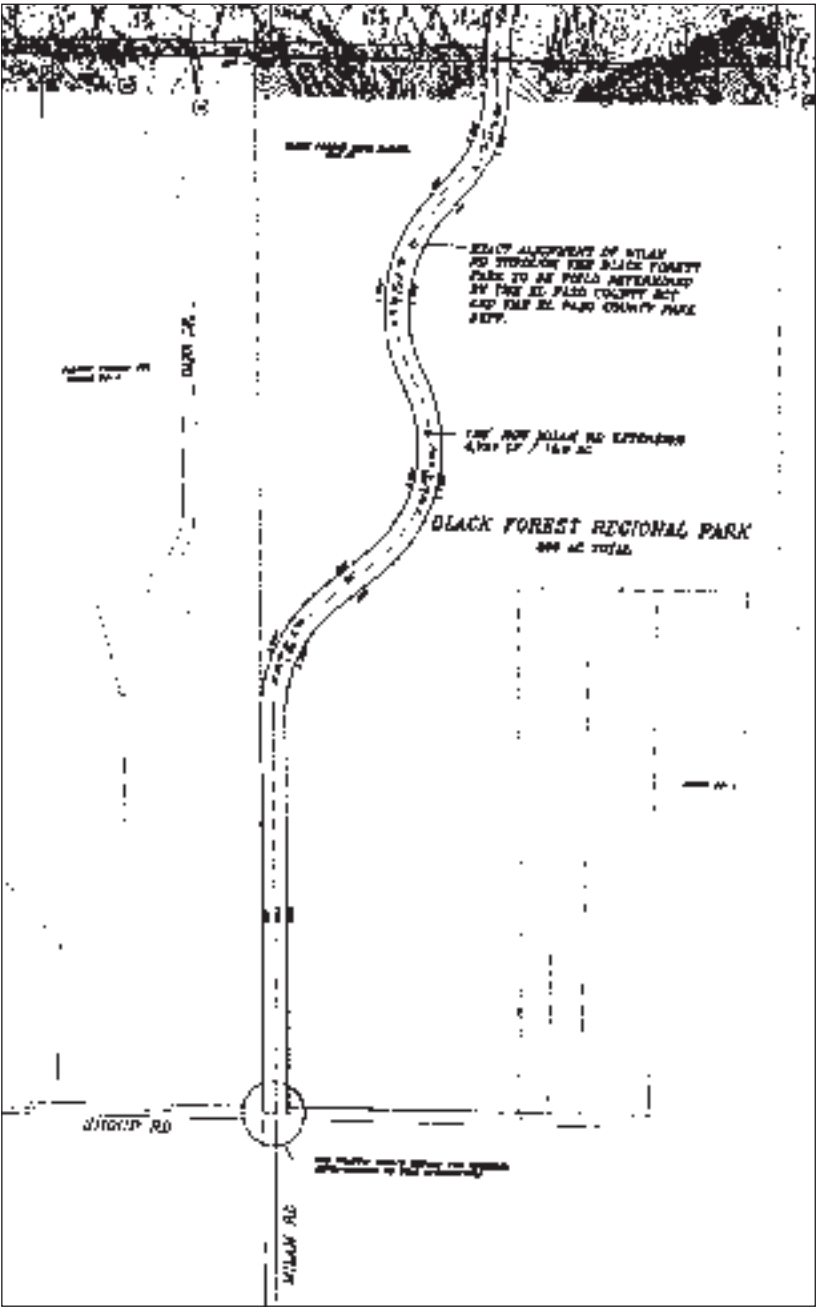
Lewis said, "We sought legal counsel. We think this is a lawful, valid, public purpose."

Bremer made a motion for approval, adding, "This is a difficult call. We have the responsibility to make difficult calls. This action just starts the process. There will be ample opportunity to negotiate in good faith. The developer has come forward with a great deal of financial commitment for the appraisal, land cost, and litigation expense. It will provide good public access without burdening public roads that would not be safe. The road needs to go approximately in this location. I hate to use eminent domain. I dislike it intensely."

The motion passed 4-1 with Commissioner Howells opposed. Howells said, "Based on what I have heard today, I ask, Why right here? Why right now? Let us see how the court case comes out. I have never been for eminent domain." She also noted that Bremer and Jones will be leaving the board shortly.

For more information on this and other projects within the county, contact the planning department at 520-6300 or visit www.elpasoco.com/planning.

The Friends of the Black Forest Regional Park, can be contacted at 495-8570, 495-1809, 3578 East Hartsell Drive #121, Colorado Springs, Colorado



The drawing above shows the originally proposed alignment of the extension of Milam Road north of Shoup Road. The current plan is to move the southern portion of the road 80' to the west so it passes up the western side of the 80 acre parcel that reaches down to Shoup Road. That requires acquisition of the easements through eminent domain and realignment of Milam Road south of Shoup.

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Carolyn Savoren
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Parks board makes no recommendation on Wal-Mart, discusses conservation easements, changes to LDC

By John Heiser

It was expected that the El Paso County Park Advisory Board would offer a recommendation regarding the Baptist Road Wal-Mart proposal at its Dec. 10 meeting; however, Barbara Nugent, Director of the El Paso County Parks Department, informed the board it has no jurisdiction to make recommendations on commercial projects, so the item was removed from the agenda.

Conservation Easements

Thomas Berg of Berniger, Berg, Diver, Noecker & Wood-Ellis, LLC, made a presentation to the board regarding the use of conservation easements to preserve open space. He said a conservation easement conveys development rights for a prop-

erty to a government entity or land trust. The IRS has specific rules governing such arrangements to ensure they have a conservation purpose. For example, the natural condition of the property must be documented and then monitored annually. Berg said there are various types of easements. Some prohibit all development. Others allow low-density development such as one dwelling per 35 acres or specify a building envelope in a secluded portion of the property.

The landowner can take the value of the development rights as an income tax charitable deduction. That deduction is limited to 30 percent of adjusted gross income but may be carried forward for up to five years. The value of the deduction is determined by comparing the current use to the value with full development to the "highest and best use." Unique to Colorado and North Carolina is that a state income tax credit can be taken for the value of the easement. As of Jan. 1, 2003, the maximum credit increases to \$260,000. The credit is calculated as 100 percent of the first \$100,000 in the value of the easement and 40 percent of the remainder, subject to the maximum credit. Development rights to larger tracts can be conveyed in several phases to maximize the tax benefit to the landowner.

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landowner. With tighter governmental budgets, there are limited funds for purchasing open space. Nugent said, "This is a great tool in keeping ahead of development and preserving what people want to leave for future generations."

Land Development Code Update

Cole Emmons, assistant county attorney, discussed the current park and trail provisions in the county's *Land Development Code*. He noted that the Falcon's Nest Filing No. 3 and Falcon's View developments prompted the current push for fees for urban parks. The developer for those projects was to get credit for constructing playgrounds in the storm water detention areas; however, that plan was abandoned because of construction difficulties and liability issues.

Under the present rules, park fees can only be used for land acquisition, not for development or maintenance of parks. Emmons said, "Revisions may be needed to give more flexibility to the county."

Dan Cleveland, park board chairman, said that at some future meeting he would like the board to discuss the issue of trail connections through commercial developments.

Parks board member Nancy Hobbs asked, "Why don't we charge commercial developers for urban parks?" Emmons said he did not know. The county parks department oversees regional parks. There remains a question as to who should have responsibility for urban parks. Nugent added that in some instances urban parks were made the responsibility of the local homeowner's association (HOA). She said that many of the HOAs do not want the responsibility. She added, "No one has monitored the lands that have reverted to the county. There is no tracking mechanism."

Mark Gebhart, principal planner with the county planning department, said he is in charge of the *Land Development Code* revisions. He said the plan is to complete the revisions within 12 or 13 months. Gebhart said provisions for parks are an important part of the *LDC* revision and added, "Planners think communities should have urban parks." He also said the planning department wants the *LDC* to accommodate conservation efforts, including conservation easements and habitat conservation plans, and to include a "beefed up wildlife element."

The El Paso County Park Advisory Board normally meets the second Tuesday of each month at 1:30 p.m. in the 3rd floor hearing room at the county building, 27 E. Vermijo, Colorado Springs. The next meeting will be held Jan. 14. For further information on the park board, contact Rich Havel of the parks planning staff at 520-6985, richhavel@elpasoco.com, www.elpasoco.com/parks, or board secretary Cindy Olson at 520-6999.

For questions about conservation easements, contact Thomas Berg of Berniger, Berg, Diver, Noecker & Wood-Ellis, LLC, 90 S. Cascade #310, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80903, 475-9900, or tberg@bbdnwe.com.

The park and open space portion of the *Land Development Code* is at www.elpasoco.com/parks/land_code.asp. The entire current *Land Development Code* is at www.elpasoco.com/planning/LDC/. Questions and suggestions for improvements to the *LDC* should be sent to Mark Gebhart, 27 E. Vermijo, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80903-2208, 520-6300, or MarkGebhart@elpasoco.com.

Fees for legal work, property appraisal, and documentation of the natural condition of the property can run \$20,000 to \$25,000 for a property that results in the maximum \$260,000 Colorado income tax credit. Berg said land trusts may pay the transaction fees. He said he is presently working on four transactions of that type. Berg noted that as a practical matter, water rights remain with the landowner. Public access to the property is not required.

Nugent added that the benefits to the county are that the easement adds open space without incurring significant expense, the property remains on the tax rolls, and the responsibility for maintenance and annual monitoring stays with the

County planning commission defers action on the Smith Creek drainage basin study due to residents' concerns

By John Heiser

The only Tri-Lakes area item on the agenda for the Dec. 17 meeting of the El Paso County Planning Commission was consideration of the Smith Creek Drainage Basin Planning Study.

The Smith Creek drainage basin covers approximately 3,500 acres (5.5 square miles) in the Northgate and Tri-Lakes planning areas. It extends from near Roller Coaster Road and Higby Road on the north to the Northgate interchange with I-25 on the southwest [See map].

JR Engineering prepared the study, proposed as an amendment to the county master plan, under contract to developer Picolan, Inc. The study recommends that the drainage basin be accepted as a closed basin with no drainage, bridge, or detention basin/land fees required. It also recommends that Picolan construct, without reimbursement, all required improvements except the box culvert at the Northgate Road/Smith Creek crossing.

Interim fees collected are to be disbursed as follows: \$7,260 to the City of Colorado Springs for the Northgate Road realignment; \$142,494 to U.S. Home; and the balance, approximately \$353,781, to Picolan.

The study was approved by the City of Colorado Springs Drainage Board on July 18, 2002, and was adopted by the Colorado Springs City Council, resolution 140-02, on Aug. 27, 2002.

Attorney Ronald L. Roberts appeared before the county planning

commission on behalf of Fred and Sue Ladd, who object to the proposed redrawing of the floodplain showing it crossing their property. In a letter, Roberts said the study "appears to misstate the actual drainage for the area to the detriment of the land owners, including the Ladds."

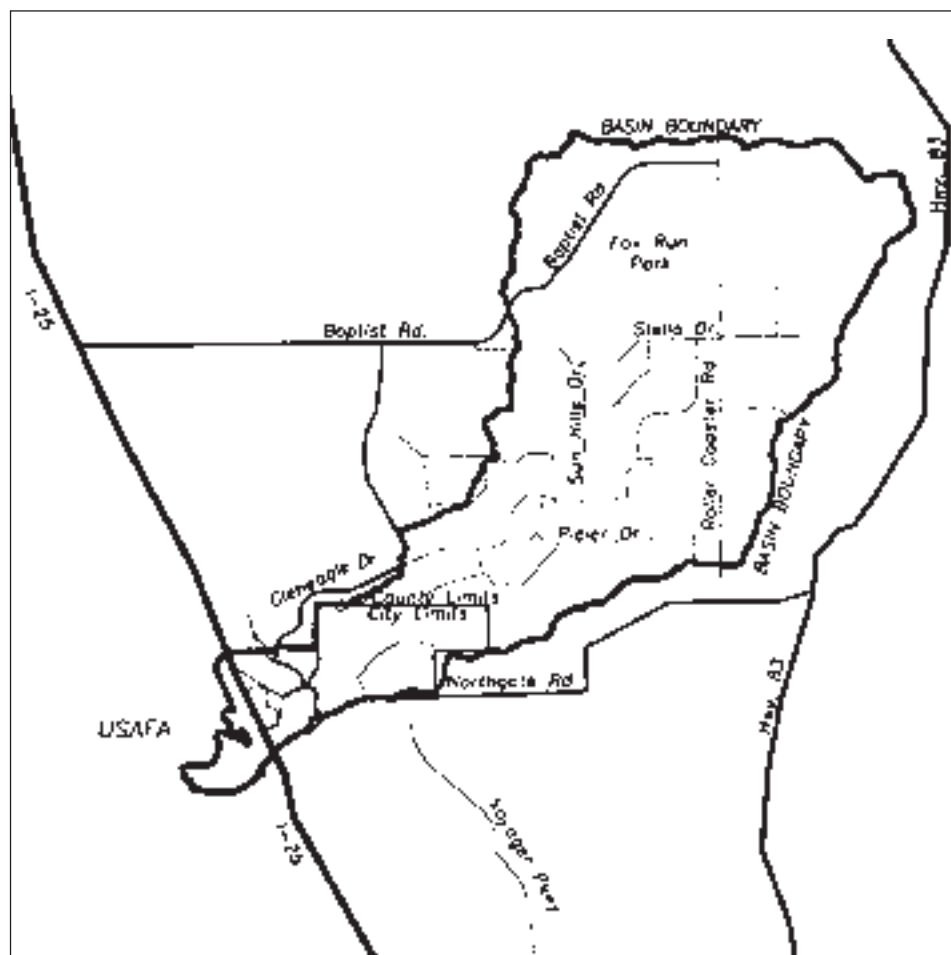
Ray and Carole O'Mara also filed an objection to the redrawn 100-year floodplain map and requested a postponement of action on the study.

The planning commission voted unanimously to continue the item to their Jan. 21 meeting to allow time for JR Engineering to meet with concerned Tri-Lakes residents.

The county planning commission normally holds hearings on the third and, if necessary, the fourth Tuesday of each month. The next hearing will be held on Jan. 21. The hearings are held in the 3rd floor hearing room of the county building, 27 E. Vermijo, Colorado Springs.

JR Engineering can be contacted at 593-2593 or 4310 Arrows West Drive, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80907. Picolan can be contacted at 381-8441 or 90 S. Cascade Avenue #1300, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80903.

For more information on these and other projects within the county, contact the planning department at 520-6300 or visit www.elpasoco.com/planning.



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Lewis-Palmer District 38 School Board Report

By Tommie Plank

December 12: School Accountability Reports were issued by the state in December, and District 38 schools once again received high marks. Lewis-Palmer High School, Palmer Lake Elementary, and Monument Academy's Elementary and 7-9 grades received "excellent" ratings. The rest of the district's elementary and middle schools received "high" ratings. These reports were sent home to parents prior to the Christmas break.

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In the continuing investigation of the future high school, administrators gave a presentation that focused on what District 38 values in the high school experience, and whether those values could be maintained or improved upon in the four scenarios under consideration. These comments were compiled from the input of audience members at more than 20 community presentations last spring. Dr. Keith Jacobus, LPHS principal, explained why, in the class scheduling process, larger numbers of students enrolled in a school allow for a broader curriculum, with more sections of various classes. Four potential boundary options were also discussed, as attendance boundaries would need to be redrawn if the board chooses to build a second high school at Highway 83 and Walker Road. At this meeting, the board also selected the architectural firm of Christiansen, Reece & Partners as the architects for the high school project. At the January meeting, they will present facilities cost comparisons for the four scenarios being considered.

The board approved the 2002-2003 mill levy at 47.937, the same rate as the last three years. The breakdown is as follows:

26.659 mills	General Fund Total Program
10.273 mills	Override approved by voters 11/2/99
<u>.110 mills</u>	Abatement
37.042 mills	Total General Fund
<u>10.895 mills</u>	Bond Redemption Fund
47.937 mills	Total Mill Levy

State law requires that by Dec. 15 the board must set the mill levy for the coming year.

Linda Williams-Blackwell Director of Special Education, reported on the status of the special education program. Currently 409 students, or 7.9 percent of the total District #38 enrollment, receive special education services. This is a .2 percent increase over last year, and does not include 78 students, who are pending evaluations. She provided an update on the progress of the goals and recommendations of the department's self-study made last year, and also addressed special education CSAP development.

Commendations were presented to Creekside Middle School employees Tracey Lehman, Tina Hackett, Reid Wiecks, and Julie Connally for their help in implementing the ISIS student services program, which allows parents to view their child's grades online. Rick Tanski of LPHS was recognized for his work on this project as well; he was also commended for his role in getting the "auto dialer" program that allows the school to send mass phone messages to parents about important information or events.

The next regular meeting of the board will be held on Jan. 16 at the administration building at Second and Jefferson Streets at 7:00 p.m.

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- *Kiplinger's Personal Finance Magazine, October 2002*
Edward Jones ranked No. 1 among full-service brokers, ahead of nine of the nation's largest brokerages overall based on results in six categories. The Edward Jones received top honors in the categories for best stock picking and best for low fees.
- *Newsweek, July 1, 2002*
Edward Jones received a favorable mention as a shining example of a firm that does what is right for customers.
- *J.D. Powers and Associates 2002 Full-Service Investor Satisfaction Study, June 2002*
Edward Jones tied for first. For more information, see www.jdpower.com.
- *Wall Street Journal, February 28, 2002*
In the WSJ's most recent stock picking survey, the five-star return on the Edward Jones' model portfolio outperformed 14 other major brokerage firms and the S&P 500 stock index.

Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District board meeting Dec. 19

By John Heiser

At their regular meeting Dec. 19, the Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District Board of Directors discussed a variety of topics including response times, plans for Station 2, and postponement of rate increases for medical services. Directors Gary Morgan and Rick Barnes were absent.

Financial Report

District director and treasurer John Hildebrandt reported that for calendar year 2002 projection he anticipates approximately a \$20,000 surplus of income over expenses. He noted that collection of ambulance charges has improved thanks to the efforts of district administrative assistant Paula Abrahamson and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) coordinator Ron Thompson.

Chief's Report

Chief Robert Denboske reported the district handled 61 responses since the Nov. 21 board meeting, for a total of 868 responses so far this year. The breakdown of the 61 responses was 24 traffic accidents, 19 medical, 11 fire, 3 hazardous materials, and 4 public assists. Total district personnel stands unchanged at 70.

The chief noted that he had a productive meeting with Dave Ury, Chief of the Black Forest Fire Protection District.

The remaining automatic mutual aid agreements with North Group departments will be restored in January.

Two new employees will be hired in January. Board President Charlie Pocock added that there will then be three paid personnel per shift. He said, "Because of the volunteer staff, there will be seven people assigned per day, seven days per week. We should be able to field four firefighters per engine and two per ambulance. That is going to be marvelous."

The chief reported that the collection of toys for Christmas Unlimited was a great success. Several of the cadets helped by making phone calls and distributing flyers.

EMS Report

Thompson reported that the medical services billing software has been installed and training is scheduled for January 8-10. The first \$10,000 cost for the software was paid in 2002. The remaining \$10,000 will be paid in 2003 following completion of the training. The associated hardware installation by local company J&L Computers is nearly complete. There is an April 2003 deadline for electronic billing to Medicare.

Thompson noted, "Collecting patient information is a pain in the neck." He outlined some approaches that should improve the accuracy and efficiency in capturing the information.

Response Time Study

Thompson reported on an analysis of response times based on the trip sheets for 249 recent calls. Response time was defined as the elapsed time from when the call was received at the station to when personnel arrived on-scene. The response time on the 249 calls varied from about one minute, where a person came to the station for medical attention, to 17 minutes in a case where the crew was coming from another call. In the latter instance, another department was the first responder. The average response time for the 249 calls was 5.85 minutes.

Thompson noted that errors in setting watches created uncertainty in the data. Some improvements in procedures for recording dispatch times and synchronizing watches are needed.

Pocock added that the multi-agency study working group is looking at maximum six-minute and four-minute response times. Hildebrandt said he thought the four-minute response time option would result in too many fire stations being built.

According to Pocock, construction of the planned Station 2 at Roller Coaster and Highway 105 would approximately cut in half response times to the eastern portions of the district. That area accounted for roughly 20 percent of the calls studied. Station 2

Pocock reported that the district has been looking at possible uses for the existing metal building at Station 2. Initially, it was suggested that Tri-Lakes Cares might have a use for it, but they do not own a parcel to put it on. The district also considered purchasing some land behind Station 1 and using the building for training exercises, but there has not been any response from the landowner. Fire Captain Bryan Jack said the Black Forest district is interested in obtaining the building for use in their training program.

Pocock reported that agreement has been reached with the Great Divide Water Company that owns the well next to Station 2. The district will be allowed to use up to 2 acre-feet per year. Ninety percent of the water used will be counted toward Great Divide's water augmentation program. The agreement calls for protection of the wellhead and allows for parking near the wellhead by Station 2 personnel.

Deannexation Withdrawn

A 2.5-acre parcel in Palmer Lake

currently covered by the Palmer Lake Volunteer Fire Department and the Tri-Lakes district had been proposed for deannexation from the Tri-Lakes district. Pocock reported that, based on discussion with the landowner, the request has been withdrawn.

Medical service rates

After holding an executive session to discuss the increases in rates adopted last month for medical services, the board unanimously agreed to postpone until next meeting implementation of the rate increases. At that meeting, whatever increases are approved will be made retroactive to January 1.

Closing Remarks

Pocock said, "I am deeply appreciative of all the work by board members, volunteers, and paid staff. It is such a pleasure to be associated with this group."

The Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District board normally meets at 7 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month at the district firehouse, 18650 Highway 105 (near the bowling alley). The next meeting will be held Jan. 16.

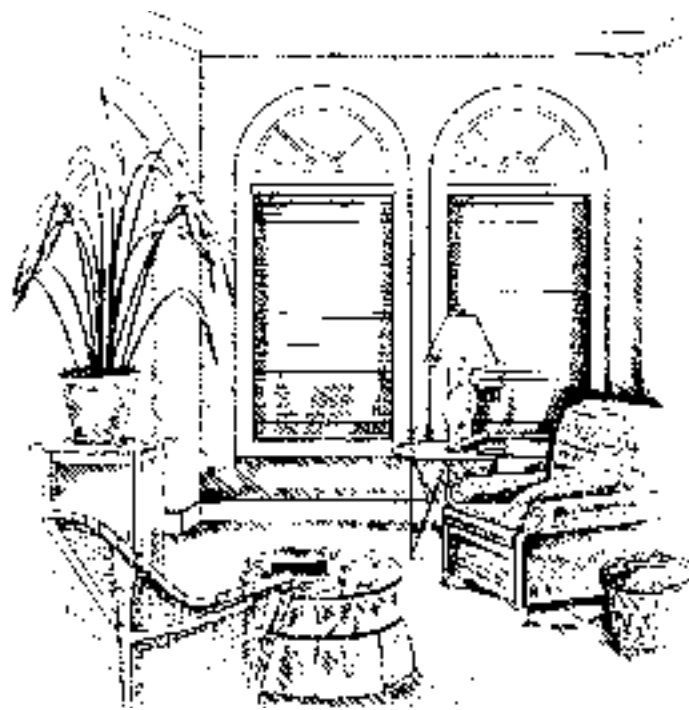
For more information, call Chief Denboske at 481-2312.

Regarding the TLFPD report in the Dec. 7, 2002, issue of OCN: (1) According to Charlie Pocock, the planned septic system design for Station 2 includes a "vertical leach field" so frequent pumping will not be required. (2) The borrowed bunker gear is only being used for training, not for fire fighting.



TLFPD Graduation. Back Row Left to Right: Brandon Rigaud, Matt Behrens, Kyle Crutcher, Mark Covey, Lucas Wardell, Kristian Naslund, Matt Ecklund, Mike Keough, Greg Boisvert, Bryan Jack, Sam Hascek, Jim Ferguson, D. Drifus, Dustin Muth. Front Row Left to Right: Cori Cusack, Kathryn McIver, Melissa Barnes, Carolyn Percy

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Triview metro board adopts 2003 budget despite resident concerns about landscaping

By John Heiser

The Triview Metropolitan District Board of Directors held its regular monthly meeting Dec. 11. The meeting was held two weeks earlier than usual so the approved 2003 budget could be submitted to the Colorado Division of Local Governments prior to the Dec. 15 deadline. There were several Jackson Creek residents in attendance.

Following a sometimes heated discussion of landscaping, Wal-Mart, and declining market conditions in Jackson Creek, the board unanimously approved the 2003 budget alternative based on a presumption that the proposed Wal-Mart will be built. Specific capital improvement funds for landscaping were not included.

2002 Budget Amended

A revised 2002 budget showing total expenditures of \$1,494,782 was unanimously approved. According to district administrator Dale Hill, the revisions included an increase in expenditures and \$420,000 more in revenue than originally anticipated. The number of building permits issued so far in 2002 stands at 114, fourteen more than projected. Ron Simpson, Triview district manager, said the additional houses produced about \$150,000 in additional revenue including tap fees paid to the district.

2003 Budget

With and Without Wal-Mart

Simpson distributed copies of a newly revised draft 2003 budget. It included the county assessor's Nov. 30 report of assessed values in the district and presented four alternatives. The recommended alternative assumes the Wal-Mart store will be approved and the Triview district will continue to use Donala Water and Sanitation to perform operations and maintenance. The Triview district plans to take over billing from Donala in 2003.

The assumption that Wal-Mart will be approved resulted in a projection of \$87,807 in additional administrative, legal, financial, engineering, and operating expenses for the district and \$229,575 in additional revenues from tap fees and use taxes. Even if approved early in 2003, the store is not expected to open until 2004, so no Wal-Mart retail sales fee revenue was included.

Total revenue to the district with Wal-Mart was projected at \$2,246,118. Total expenses were projected at \$1,504,735, with the remaining \$741,383 going to service the district's debt, reported to be \$22 million.

According to the budget, if the Wal-Mart project is not approved, revenues would be projected at \$2,016,543 against expenses of \$1,416,928, with \$599,615 going to debt service. This may understate the expenses since some services from the district, such as legal negotiation of the PIC agreements, will be needed to support Wal-Mart's application to the county, even if the project is ultimately rejected by the county or abandoned by Wal-Mart.

Capital projects shown in the budget totaled \$345,000 to be paid from an escrow account for the Monument Creek wastewater interceptor. That pipe is needed to supply service to the planned commercial properties to the west of I-25. The project is being developed through an agreement between Triview and the Forest Lakes Metropolitan District. Costs are split between the two districts. The current balance in the escrow account of more than \$1 million came from a negotiated settlement with Pinetree Properties.

As reported in the Oct. 5, 2002 issue of OCN, assuming the Wal-Mart is approved, before any more houses can be served the district is requiring that a new well be drilled. A well into the Denver aquifer could supply about 200 houses. To serve 300 to 400 houses would require a more expensive well into the deeper Arapahoe aquifer. The 2003 budget stated that the proposed Denver Well No. 7 was removed from the proposed capital projects because "Triview has not received the necessary commitment for funding required to guarantee its construction."

An additional \$164,000 was shown but not assigned or committed for tanks, pump, and metering of reuse water for Creekside Middle School and Creekside Park.

Lack of budget for landscaping

In the 2003 budget, no capital project funding was identified for landscaping.

Simpson reported that Triview submitted an application to Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) for a lottery funds grant to improve the Heights Trail and

trickle channel landscaping. He said the intent is to apply in 2003 for a \$50,000 trails planning grant. Matching funds of \$12,500 were included in the approved budget.

G.B. "Steve" Stephenson, vice president of the Heights-Jackson Creek Community Group representing more than 300 of the approximately 550 occupied houses in Jackson Creek, said, "People are thinking of leaving the neighborhood because of appearance." Director and Jackson Creek resident Martha Gurnick added that some houses have been for sale for more than ten months. She said, "The residents are very unhappy."

Simpson replied, "We have made good strides considering we are fighting a drought." Stephenson said, "Residents are waiting on this board's response. The budget shows token funding for an issue that is paramount in our minds."

Simpson retorted, "What do you want me to cut, water and wastewater?"

Gurnick said, "We are looking at Wal-Mart that we think is going to be there." Simpson added, "If Wal-Mart occurs then the picture totally changes in terms of capital projects and how it happens."

Peter Susemihl, attorney for the district, said to the board, "You can amend the budget at any time. We need to find a way to do this; otherwise you face a spiral effect of a declining neighborhood."

Gurnick said, "It has got to be done. People buy in Gleneagle when they won't buy in Jackson Creek. The residents want to see green grass. The bondholder can wait while we take care of landscaping."

Susemihl said, "All revenues go to the bondholder except those needed for operations and maintenance. We need to work with the bondholder to put more landscaping into O&M. Give Ron [Simpson] and I until the end of February to work with the builders."

Rick Blevins of Jackson Creek Vision Development Company said, "Give us until February or March. By then we will have a better idea of where Wal-Mart is. If Wal-Mart is looking like it is going to happen, the bondholder may be more willing to look at landscaping."

Gurnick said, "Whether Wal-Mart is there or not, this is something that needs to be taken care of. Revenues are adequate. Maybe they are pointed in the wrong direction. House prices are dropping in Jackson Creek. The neighbors want to know when is it going to be done."

Director and Jackson Creek resident Linda Jones added, "While we are waiting on Wal-Mart, we need to get a plan of what we need to do. We need to see real figures so we are ready to go."

Susemihl said, "Ron [Simpson] and I will come back with costs with and without Wal-Mart." Simpson added, "If we get the GOCO grant, that will make it easier."

Jackson Creek resident Bill Chin said, "Many people are already talking about leaving. Two houses in my neighborhood have been sitting for sale for over a year. Market values are \$20,000 to \$40,000 below building cost. Some have dropped below \$200,000. Wal-Mart is already scaring a lot of people out of here. Five of my neighbors put their houses on the market." He said that house prices in Gleneagle are dropping as well.

Stephenson asked, "Is there any opportunity to increase the O&M line item so funds are there now? Why can't you amend the O&M line now? Leather Chaps and Lyons Tail is an eyesore."

Blevins replied, "The budget would have to go back to the bondholder for approval."

Gurnick asked, "It still has to meet with bond-

(Continued on page 11)



TRIVIEW (Continued from page 10)

holder approval?" Susemihl said, "They review and comment. It is your decision."

Jones made a motion to approve the budget and certify the current property tax mill levy at 25 mills. The motion was unanimously approved. Gurnick said the intention is to amend the budget by February to address the landscaping issue. Simpson said, "I wanted to piecemeal [the landscaping] the best I could." A workshop on landscaping was scheduled for Jan. 4, 9 a.m. at the district office.

Palmer Divide Water Group

Susemihl reported that an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with the northern water providers including Woodmoor, Donala, Monument, and Palmer Lake has been drafted. He described it as "non-binding agreement to study water issues." The agreement will expire on March 31, 2003, unless it is extended. The board unanimously approved the IGA.

Simpson noted that the Academy Water and Sanitation District has dropped out of the group, leaving a total of six water providers.

Kathy Walters added, "I love it when everybody gets together to work for common interest."

Overhead power line

Blevins reported that Mountain View Electric has requested an easement for an overhead transmission line heading north from the end of Leather Chaps. He said the overhead line is needed until the right-of-way for the extension of Leather Chaps is finalized, an event he said, "that depends on bonding and development." Blevins added that the cost to build a bridge over Jackson Creek is "pretty expensive."

Gurnick said, "I can just hear everybody screaming."

Board president Kathy Walters said that this approach will save money by deferring a decision on the exact alignment.

Blevins added, "Monument doesn't allow overhead lines. [Mountain View Electric] will need to get a variance."

District Engineer's Report

District engineer Chuck Ritter of Nolte and Associates reported that there was a meeting on reuse water irrigation at Creekside Middle School and the Gleneagle golf course. Donala agreed to buy a weather station to read evapo-transpiration rates. This is needed to ensure that the irrigation is done at the proper rate so the plants use all the water and there is no runoff or groundwater impact.

Jackson Creek Filing #5

Simpson reported that the proposed residential and commercial development north of King Soopers has been reviewed. He said, "They are missing our standards by small margins." He said the project is moving forward. No agreement has been reached regarding drilling of the needed well.

Wal-Mart

Simpson reported difficulty with Wal-Mart developer Goldberg Property Associates. He said, "It is tough to get them pinned down." Susemihl said he and Simpson have been "trying to set up a meeting with the Wal-Mart people regarding the agreements."

Monument's Draft

Revised Comprehensive Plan

Ron Simpson said revised text for the plan has not yet been distributed. He said, "The map is fine but we need to see the text."

The Triview Metropolitan District Board of Directors normally meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month, 6:30 p.m., at the district offices, 174 North Washington St. The next meeting will be held January 22.

A workshop on landscaping will be held on Jan. 4, 9 a.m. at the district offices.

For further information, contact the Triview Metropolitan District at 488-6868.

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Monument Board of Trustees Special budget meeting Dec. 11

By Judy Barnes

Trustee George Brown was absent.

Town Manager Rick Sonnenburg recounted that at its December 2 meeting, the board considered approval of the FY2003 budget using three emergency ordinances. These emergency ordinances appeared to pass by votes of 4-2, 4-2, and 5-1. Subsequently, town staff discovered that since all three were emergency ordinances, they needed six votes to pass. So, none of the three actually passed. Town Attorney Gary Shupp referred to a statute section that makes budget ordinances “effective upon adoption.” This made passage of the budget in December possible without emergency ordinances.

Public Hearing for FY2003 Budget

Tim Schutz, of Pewter Lane, expressed concerns about the budget proposed. Schutz took issue with two items. First, he said the adopting and appropriating ordinances were not fully representing the appropriation of fund balances in all funds—especially the General Fund and Water Fund—because there were not line items in the two ordinances stating such appropriations of fund balances. Second, he said the board, in the FY2003 budget, was proposing to use too much of the fund balances, especially in the General Fund and Water Fund, leaving the fund balances too low.

“You are spending more than \$2 million of reserves and not putting it into the budget,” Schutz noted. “Previous boards generated \$3 million in reserves. This budget proposes to spend two-thirds of those reserves...What if we have a problem?”

Schutz also noted the budget contained \$2 million in capital acquisitions just in the water fund alone. “This is irresponsible. This is our money, it’s our neighbors’ money.... Don’t spend \$2 million of the town’s reserves,” Schutz admonished.

In view of the downturn in the economy and General Fund revenues being down, he objected to the proposal to increase General Fund expenditures

10 percent. Schutz urged the board to “go back and sharpen your pencils. It’s not appropriate to spend \$3 million in reserves.”

Sonnenburg responded, “The wisdom of spending reserves on capital is always a question.” He added that the town needed to drill a new well. “We’ve had a drought and growth. We’ve been saving, saving, saving to do that.”

According to Sonnenburg, Public Works Superintendent Tom Wall thought this is the time to drill a new well, “so we don’t have to take extreme measures like asking our residents not to water their lawns.” A preliminary estimate for the cost of a new well and treatment plant was \$840,000.

Trustee Glenda Smith commented that she thought the water fund was in trouble and that having only \$453,000 in reserves in that fund was dangerous. “We need to look at our water fund and keep it healthy,” Smith said.

Wall commented that the drilling cost of the well is minimal; the expense is building the treatment plant. Well 8 cost \$1.2 million, according to Wall. Trustee Smith also questioned the cost of the administration building proposed for the well 8 site expansion. “Yes, it’s a balanced budget, but it’s how we’re balancing it that disturbs me,” Smith concluded. Later, Smith suggested waiting a year before drilling a new well. She also asked to see details about the 3 percent increase in salaries for each employee.

Town Treasure Judy Skryzpek wanted more time to prepare a better response to Schutz’s comments. Mayor Konarski asked if she felt comfortable that the numbers are correct. Skryzpek replied that she did. Mayor Konarski noted, “If we don’t do the capital expenses, we have enough money ‘to run the store.’ The community has saved money to do projects, but if the money isn’t there, we’re not going to do them.” Later, she said, “I’m going to ask that we recognize that the budget is just a plan.”

Trustee Christopher Perry asked, “Where does the public think we can cut back?”

Schutz responded, “I’m asking you to take a hard look at the numbers and prioritize. My sense is that you haven’t done that, that you’ve just approved what’s come before you. I leave it to you. You have to exercise that judgment.”

Trustee Frank Orten said, “I’d like to delay this.” After a reference to “the fiscal irresponsibility of the past, 2000–2001,” he added that he “doesn’t want to go down that path.”

Mayor Konarski asked Schutz to give his data to Treasurer Skryzpek to help her respond to his comments.

Skryzpek agreed to generate a second version of the budget excluding all capital expenses.

Schutz reminded the board that they did not have to approve the budget tonight—it only had to be adopted by the end of the month. Sonnenburg responded that the property tax mill levy resolution had to be approved by Friday, December 13, but that the public hearing and the ordinances could be postponed to the board’s regularly scheduled meeting on December 16.

Resolution #40-2002

Setting the FY2003 Property Tax Rate

A motion to approve the resolution setting a mill levy of 6.469 passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Ordinance Adopting a Budget for FY2003 and Ordinance Appropriating Sums of Money for the FY2003 Budget

The board unanimously approved a motion to continue the public hearing for adopting the FY2003 budget and appropriating sums of money for the FY2003 budget until Monday, December 16.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m..

Monument Board of Trustees meeting Dec. 16

By Judy Barnes

Boy Scouts Tyler and Riley Wade led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comments

Tim Schutz commented on the FY2003 budget. Schutz said he was even more concerned this week than last week about how low the water fund would be drawn down, using reserves it took years to accumulate. He noted that the board intended to spend nearly \$3 million of the reserves, leaving only \$312,000. “I think that’s a mistake,” Schutz cautioned. He urged the board to reduce the capital expenditures.

Kyle Bus, Pegasus Transit Proposal

Kyle Bus presented four different proposals for a public bus system between the Tri-Lakes area and the Denver Tech Center, Chapel Hills Mall, the Castle Rock Outlet Mall, and Park Meadows. The cost to the town would range from \$55,000 to \$127,500 per year, depending on the service chosen. Three-month and six-month rates were also provided. Trustee Christopher Perry noted, “The Town of Monument would be subsidizing the entire Tri-Lakes area.” The towns of Monument and Palmer Lake have 6,000 residents between them, while an additional 20,000 live in unincorporated El Paso County. The board decided to take no action on the proposal.

Colorado Springs National Bank

Final plat and final PD site plan

Perry Thomas, and Rick Haering, of Thomas & Thomas, described the project. The bank will be

built on the location of the former Texaco, near two other banks. Construction is scheduled to begin immediately. Town Planner Mike Davenport remarked that this was the cleanest application he had seen in the two years he has been with the town. Trustees raised questions about the landscaping and about safety of the access to State Highway 105. Davenport said that in late 2003 or early 2004 there will be a traffic signal at the Safeway entry, opposite the entry road serving this bank and the one behind it. Access to this bank is shown to be from a side road, not from 105, but Trustee George Brown pointed out that people using the drive-up teller service will probably leave through the People’s Bank lot and out onto 105. Trustee Byron Glenn voiced concern about the line of sight from People’s Bank being limited by the new bank’s landscaping. A motion to approve the project passed unanimously, with the condition that the sight distance be checked.

FY2003 Budget

Mayor Betty Konarski invited Trustee Frank Orten to read a statement about the budget process he had prepared. Orten’s caustic commentary attacked past and present board members and citizens alike. He objected to statements made [by Tim Schutz at the budget meeting on December 11] that it would be fiscally irresponsible to accept the FY2003 budget as presented. Orten retorted, “In fact the actions of the board that fired the previous treasurer could be looked at as fiscally irresponsible. Not because they fired the previous treasurer, but they failed to hire one. It was approximately a year and a half be-

fore the position was filled. The people responsible for filling the position, the board of trustees, caused this problem.” The board Orten was talking about had only 5½ months from the time the previous treasurer left and the recall. After that, an interim board was in power for 6½ months, during which time no treasurer was hired; then the current board took 4½ months to hire a treasurer. Tim Schutz rebuked Orten, noting, “This type of behavior is divisive to the community...you as a trustee are capable of better.”

Discussion of the budget focused chiefly on water fund expenditures, including the need for a new well. Public Works Superintendent Tom Wall told the board the town was at 87 percent of use of all its water resources. Trustee Glenda Smith asked about the urgency of the administrative offices at the well #8 site. Wall explained that it was more economical to add the offices during expansion of the building for the well #3 treatment facility. Trustee Christopher Perry commented, “We need to be a little more conservative. I’d like to see the water fund balance be a little higher.” Trustee Doug Warner’s view was that the town was going to need the administration building, so better to do it now. Town Planner Mike Davenport noted that in 2003, the planning department was budgeted to do a facility study that would examine different options for meeting the town’s needs for building space.

Trustees Smith and Perry agreed to pass the budget with the removal of the expenditure of

(Continued on page 13)

MONUMENT DEC. 16 (Continued from page 12)

\$200,000 for the new water department administrative building addition at the well #8 site, and reduction of \$35,000 (from \$112,000 to \$77,000) for emergency generators. These changes increased the ending water fund balance (reserves) from \$172,497 to \$407,497. Also in the water fund budget is a board contingency line item of \$312,000 set aside to cover cost overruns of any capital acquisitions. If no cost overruns occur, that money could be available for other water fund projects, increasing the fund balance to \$719,497. The board voted 6-1 to adopt the amended budget and to approve appropriations of \$5,887,549 for the operating budget for the various funds. Trustee Warner dissented to both ordinances; he objected to deleting the line item for the new water department administrative offices.

Monthly financial presentation

The money in the bank for all 19 town accounts at the end of November was \$4,047,044.60. Estimated revenues for 2002 are \$4,766,495. Estimated expenditures for all funds are \$3,766,155. The town shows a surplus for FY2002 of \$1,000,340. According to these figures, the town made \$1 million in a year that our county, state, and federal governments all showed a deficit. According to the audit of 2001, the cash position of the town at year's end was \$3,419,111.

ASI payment for damage to mouse habitat at the Monument Dam site

During construction, ASI-RCC, the contractor for the repair work and mouse corridor at the dam, inadvertently damaged what was then assessed to be 17 percent of the Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse habitat at the dam site. As a result, the town needed to create additional mouse habitat using town land on the north side of Dirty Woman Creek Park. The hope was that ASI would pay 17 percent of the cost of land purchased by the town for mouse mitigation. Roger Sams, of GMS, Inc., reported that on Dec. 13, the site was reevaluated. The new findings reduced the amount of impact from 17 percent to 11 percent. The estimated cost was \$10,000, but ASI offered only \$5,000 and did not respond to Sams' effort to get them up to \$7,000. Sams pointed out, "To try to pick up another \$5,000 we might spend that much." Trustee Perry thought ASI should pay more, saying "They messed up." Mayor Konarski commented, "They messed up such a little bit." Trustee Warner said, "I've got a problem that they won't budge from \$5,000. That's not negotiation." Mayor Konarski concluded, "My sense is that we need to move on." A motion to settle at \$5,000 passed unanimously. The board also approved releasing the remaining \$45,000 retainage the town had been holding.

Administrative approval of minor plats and replats for business uses

This is part of the ongoing effort to simplify the development application process. Like many communities, the Town of Monument has a standard subdivision process and a simpler administrative process for reviewing "minor" plats or "replats."

A previous ordinance (27-2000) limited the use of the simpler process to residential subdivisions—administrative review for nonresidential subdivisions was not allowed. The proposed change would allow administrative review of any type of minor plat or replat. The older business sections (along Highway 105 and the historic downtown) have entered a period of sites being "redeveloped" to new and different uses. The availability of a simpler administrative review process could aid the revitalization of downtown. The board agreed to the change.

Merit pay concepts and salary range structure adjustment

Town Manager Rick Sonnenburg recommended using a 1.9 percent cost-of-living adjustment and a 1.1 percent merit pool with the range of possible merit raises being 0-2.2 percent. For the sal-

ary range structure, Sonnenburg recommended an adjustment to the set of ranges—an increase of 1.9 percent to the bottoms and tops of all ranges using the cost-of-living figure from the state. The motion to approve Sonnenburg's recommendations passed unanimously.

Grant application for street trees

In 2001, the Town of Monument received a \$1,000 grant from the Colorado State Forest Service as part of the Street Tree Planting Program for trees planted along the road in Limbach Park and in Monument Skate Park. An equal local match is required. Last year, the town's application for trees along 2nd Street extension was not funded.

At its Dec. 10, 2002, meeting, the Parks and Landscape Committee recommended submitting a Street Tree grant application again this year, again with any money received being used for trees along the planned extension of 2nd Street (Highway 105 west to Beacon Lite Road). The proposed request would be for 14 green ash trees of 2-inch diameter. A motion to approve the grant application passed 6-1, with Trustee Brown dissenting.

Discussion of possible ordinance amendment about littering

Rick Sonnenburg told of a phone call from a Jackson Creek resident concerning the distribution of loose one-page fliers onto residents' driveways. Sonnenburg thought it was possible to change the wording of the existing town code to make such distribution of loose flyers illegal. The board's view was that such a change would create problems with enforcement. They decided to bring up the subject in the town newsletter and not change the legislation.

Additional posting and meeting places

The board discussed public posting places, particularly in Jackson Creek. They decided to pursue posting in other locations, including Jackson Creek schools, and to schedule quarterly board meetings at Creekside Middle School.

Projects for parks master plan

After receiving the GoCo grant in early 2002, the town selected the Colorado Center for Community Development (CCCD) to develop a parks plan. Based on available funds, CCCD indicated it also would be possible to include four "focus" projects:

1. View shed analysis from I-25
2. I-25 pedestrian underpass study near the high school
3. Streetscape enhancement project in the downtown area
4. Entrance design for the 2nd Street and Highway 105 intersection

CCCD has passed the midpoint on the entry design for 2nd and 105 intersection and will be ready to begin the remaining projects in January. The board decided to replace the view shed analysis project with a corridor study of 2nd Street.

Mountain View Electric Association request for a waiver to allow temporary overhead electric line in Jackson Creek

Les Ulfers, of Mountain View Electric Association, requested that the board grant a temporary waiver to the requirement for underground installation of electric lines in Jackson Creek. They would like to proceed with the designing of a temporary overhead line from the north end of Leather Chaps Drive to their substation northwest of Creekside Middle School. The overhead temporary line will be converted to underground as development extends northward. In response to a question about the time frame for putting the line underground, Mike Davenport noted that due to the mouse habitat and the problem of crossing the creek, it may be a couple of years before any significant northward development takes place. A motion to grant the waiver, not to exceed two years, for the temporary overhead line passed unanimously.

Trustee Byron Glenn to replace Mike Wicklund on the Fountain Creek Watershed Technical Advisory Committee

Trustee Orten suggested putting Trustee Glenn

on the committee to utilize Glenn's technical knowledge. Mayor Konarski pointed out that she and Trustee Smith were the board members most knowledgeable about water issues. It wasn't that Mike hadn't done a good job, according to Konarski; it was that they need more board members to know the issues and the people involved. A motion to replace Mike Wicklund with Trustee Glenn passed unanimously.

Committee/ Staff Reports

Mayor Konarski gave the trustees information about project funding and status from the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments. She reported that the Baptist Road interchange project had been postponed.

Trustee Glenn reported on the Water Resources Committee of the Homebuilders Association of Denver. Tap fees are going up, but they are trying to keep water tap fees low to keep housing affordable. They are exploring bringing water from the western slope to the eastern slope. People on the western slope want to see greater conservation efforts by eastern slope water users.

Town Manager Rick Sonnenburg reported that Safeway had gotten a one-year extension to the \$100,000 bond for a traffic light at the store entry.

The police department reported the following incidents involving alcohol: In October, six citations were written for underage drinking and seven citations were written for driving under the influence; in November, there were five citations for underage drinking, and nine citations for driving under the influence. In response to an ad for an entry-level police officer, the department received eight applications and will conduct testing for the position on Jan. 11, 2003.

The planning department reported that the planning commission recommended approval of Valley Ridge patio homes on the west side of Old Denver Road, just south of Dirty Woman Creek and of a regulation change concerning minor plats and replats for nonresidential development. The commission continued the following to its meeting on Jan. 8: request to update Regency Park zone map; request to rezone 10 acres east of King Soopers from PRD-10 to PCD; recommendations to update zoning; and subdivision regulation.

The public works department highlights reported the total amount of water produced to meet demand during November was 7 million gallons. The department received a donation from CDOT of 10 mature pine trees dug from the site of the new Park-N-Ride. They planted the trees north of the existing public works yard. The department continued evaluating the permissibility of converting the skate park to a multiple-use (bicycles, skates, and skateboard) facility.

The clerk department reported that the Small Town Christmas celebration on Dec. 7 was a huge success, with fresh-baked cookies and hot cider served to an even larger crowd than they had last year.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.



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Palmer Lake Town Council workshop and meeting Dec. 5

By Judy Barnes

Planning Commission appointment

David Cooper will replace Ty Harris, who left the planning commission in August. Cooper expressed interest in being involved with the town and considered service on the planning commission to be a good place to start. He is a part-time estimator for a plumbing contractor.

Fountain Creek Watershed study presentation

Mike Wicklund, from Monument Sanitation, and Bruce Thorson, from Colorado Springs, gave a slide show presentation on the importance of the study. Slides showed extensive damage that resulted from flooding of Fountain Creek in past years. Most problems with the watershed stem from population growth and development, which have increased impervious surfaces from pavement and rooftops. The increased runoff that results, combined with

increased wastewater treatment plant discharge, causes streambank erosion, sedimentation, and flooding along Fountain Creek. As population surrounding the watershed increases, so will the problems. Wicklund noted that it is an expensive study and commented, "Hopefully it brings about some very sensible results." The total cost of the study is \$2,972,276, with the federal government paying half. The other half would be shared by 11 local governments. Palmer Lake's share would be \$3,190, spread evenly over three years, from 2002 to 2004. Trustees Chuck Cornell and Randy Jones questioned the value of the study. The intergovernmental agreement for the study passed, with Cornell and Jones dissenting.

Committee reports

Cindy Allen of Parks thanked Alan Bockhaus for donating the Pepsi and Coke barrels for holding cold drinks. Allen also noted the new sidewalk from the parking lot across from the firehouse through the village green to the library and museum.

Water Trustee Chuck Cornell reported on his bi-weekly inspection of the reservoir. The water level was down about 2 inches, which was not much change from the previous month. The town's water usage was 4 million gallons per month. The new well is operational but needs a filter.

Roads Trustee Randy Jones reported that the department received the grant for the chipper, which will cover half the cost. The chipper will be able to handle limbs up to four inches in diameter.

Police Trustee Eddie Kinney reported that traffic citations were up 34 from the previous month.

Trustee Susan Miner, of Community & Economic Development and Buildings, told of plans for using the town hall, including the New Year's Eve party for LPHS students, and efforts to market the hall for corporate retreats. She was getting bids for adding high-speed internet access to the building, a feature that many corporations want.

Fire Trustee Scott Russell reported that the star on Sundance Mountain had been completely torn down and rebuilt.

Mayor Nikki McDonald thanked Town Clerk Della Gins for her work on balancing the budget, noting that Gins was in the office until 1:30 a.m. on some nights.

Input on items not on the agenda

Trustee Kinney asked about the possibility of removing the moratorium on water taps. The general response was that Water Superintendent Steve Orcutt was no longer in favor of lifting that moratorium.

Trustee Allen noted there was supposed to be an acceleration/deceleration lane for the Willow Creek town homes development. Della Gins said the developer had gotten an extension from the state on the permit for access onto State Highway 105. The developers, Dan Potter and Brent Hawker, are posting a bond in the event the access is not completed. Acting Town Attorney Jim Kin noted the developer had a year to comply with the lane requirement; otherwise the town could use the bond money to complete the work. Kin suggested Della Gins send a letter to the state opposing any extensions; the town wants the work done for the safety of its citizens. He also suggested sending a letter to the developer.

Charlie Ihlenfeld asked if anything had been done about removing the boulders and debris on Upper Glenway. Trustee Jones said no; they can't find out for sure if the town has bladed that road for 22½ years. Gins added, "It's whether we've bladed the entire width is the question." Jones said that according to Town Attorney Larry Gaddis, if

the town maintained the road for 22½ years, the road belongs to the town. Attorney Kin added that if the road is platted and dedicated to the town, the town has to accept it for maintenance. If the public uses a road for 20 years, it becomes a public highway. Jones said that the section in question has been maintained since 1988, when it was replatted. Kin noted that the 50 yards in question is therefore not a public road yet. Attorney Larry Gaddis will express an opinion on the town's position.

Request for new business license:

Colorado Cabinet Design and Sales

Shawn Kunze of El Paso Road plans to design and sell pre-manufactured cabinets. The request was approved unanimously.

Vacation and replat of interior lot lines

7 Valley Crescent - Paula Johnson

Paula Johnson explained that phase 1, the owner's quarters, was done. The bed and breakfast will stand on its own. Building is scheduled to begin late January/early February. She is planning four or five bedrooms plus a game room in the finished basement. The measure passed unanimously.

Annexation of Cornuke Subdivision

(a one-parcel annexation, zoning R1E, creating a single lot minor subdivision located at the intersection of Forest View and Douglas Roads)

Jim Fitzgerald recounted how last spring, Bob Cornuke asked Fitzgerald to sell him a parcel of 2½ acres. El Paso County required proof that the town would supply water. Additionally, Fitzgerald had to do a biological study and set aside habitat for the Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse. Palmer Lake Planning Commissioner Gary Coleman said he thought the subdivision should have come before the planning commission. He stated that he didn't think anyone on the board had seen a copy of the final plat. He said he did not think granting a new water tap was fair to the rest of the residents who could not water their lawns or wash their cars. Fitzgerald countered, "With that letter [to the county, March 28, 2002], the town made a commitment to us, and I'd like them to follow through." Trustee Russell asked, "What's in it for the town?" Fitzgerald replied that the town would gain the annexation fee, water tap fee, and dedication to the town of a 30-foot right-of-way (required by the county for the potential widening of the road). After considerable discussion, the annexation was approved with the condition that a 30-foot easement was platted by December 13, with Trustees Allen and Cornell dissenting. A motion to grant a water tap passed, with Trustee Cornell dissenting.

Request for a fire line by Allen Fritts

Inn at Palmer Divide

This item was tabled until January.

Resolution/Ordinance 25

Appropriating sums of money for 2003

This item was approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m..

Correction

The December issue of OCN reported that Trustee Kinney voted against increasing the dog tag fee. He did not oppose that measure. Kinney did oppose the surcharge on water bills. He wanted the town to compare how much it costs the town for 1,000 gallons of water from the reservoir and from the old well, and estimate the cost from the new well. Kinney also wanted commercial customers to pay the same rate that residential customers pay. Currently, commercial customers are charged a lower rate for water.



Trail Ridge (Northgate) - Better than New 2 Story 1998 Campbell Home with \$28,000 in upgrades, 3 BR, 3 BA, Unfinished Basement

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Palmer Lake Volunteer Fire Department receives FEMA grant

The PLVFD was awarded a grant of \$44,555 from the 2002 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program of the Federal Emergency Management Agency

(FEMA). The department had been waiting since April to hear if they would receive the grant, so this was welcome news. The money will be used

to purchase firefighter safety equipment, including self-contained breathing apparatus and bunker gear (personal protective equipment).

Fence and weed ordinances in Woodmoor

By Chris Pollard

The Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) meetings in December addressed two major problems, fences and weeds. Both issues affect most residents and are complicated in terms of defining both the problem and solution.

The fence problem centers on the practice of putting wire behind the standard WIA-approved fencing of cedar split rail to keep animals both in and out. Concerns have arisen because of the type of wire being used and because, in some cases, the wire is extended above the fence. Split rail fence was originally allowed to be put up with no approvals, but now requires signatures from neighboring lot owners. The people who say fences are unnecessary and invisible fences will suffice disregard the problem of roaming dogs that can ignore the invisible fence and attack dogs on the lot.

There is also the ambiguous and unresolved issue of 'kennels.' Some understand kennel to mean a dog house, but the term can also apply to a fenced run. One suggestion under discussion is to replace fences with kennels, ignoring the other uses of fences to protect children and small dogs.

The other major issue is weeds. Currently, El Paso County has rules for the control of what are called noxious weeds, ones that are not native and multiply rapidly to take over from the natural vegetation. In Woodmoor, the most prevalent of these are thistles. Current discussion centers on what height is acceptable for weeds and grasses. The number being used is 18 inches. This height presents a number of problems because no mower will mow to this height, so the alternative for most people is probably lower than 3 inches. What will be covered under the term "weeds or grasses" was not discussed. On a city lot, the definition is easier to enforce because lawns, borders, and driveways are defined. In Woodmoor, almost all lots have wild or native vegetation over 18 inches, so under a strict interpretation, all of the lots would require mowing. If the 18-inch rule were to apply to driveways and lawns, then a driveway and lawn consisting of nothing but dandelions, yuccas, and other non-noxious weeds mowed to a height of 18 inches would be acceptable. Obviously, this would be quite unacceptable, given that

the goal of any rule change is to ensure a properly maintained lot where true weeds are controlled and driveways kept up.

Discussion of these issues will continue at the next WIA meeting on Wednesday, Jan. 15, at 7 p.m. Meetings are held at the Woodmoor Barn, usually on the first and third Wednesday of each month.

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Our FIRST Open Studio Dance 9:00-11:00 PM, Feb. 28, 2003

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\$60/Couple, \$30/Single for each remaining month.

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(A discounted rate will apply if you choose to do both classes.)

Open dance will be \$2.50 per person for the 2 hour dance.

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Karen at 650-2659 or Jeremy at 930-9567**



CDOT unveils proposed interchange designs

On December 11, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), in cooperation with the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA), held its third open house meeting to present the design alternatives for the I-25 interchanges at Baptist and Northgate Roads.

Presentation boards outlined the proposed design alternatives for the I-25/Baptist and Northgate Road interchanges. Representatives from CDOT, USAFA, and the engineering firm of Post, Buckley, Schuh, and Jernigan (PBS&J) were available to answer questions.

“Based on information gathered at previous open house meetings and further evaluation of our initial concepts, we’ve come up with interchange designs that we believe will meet the needs of the community as well as satisfy state and federal requirements,” said James Flohr, I-25 Corridor manager.

The two proposed conceptual designs are shown on the facing page. The Baptist Road interchange design incorporates

- A diamond design with a new bridge over I-25
- Realignment of Baptist over I-25
- Realignment of the southeast frontage road to Jackson Creek Parkway on the west side of the King Soopers shopping center
- Realignment of the northeast frontage road to improve intersection spacing
- Relocation of the accesses for the Total station and Foxworth-Galbraith (formerly Brookhart’s) lumber company

The Northgate Road interchange design incorporates

- A combined Northgate Road and Powers Boulevard interchange
- Direct connection from Powers Boulevard to Northgate Road
- New bridges on I-25 over Northgate Road and Powers Boulevard
- Diamond interchange at Powers Boulevard and Voyager Parkway

The next step is to conduct an environmental assessment. That is scheduled for completion in the

summer of 2003. After that a final design will be prepared and funding sought.

Estimated costs for the two interchanges are shown below. As reported in a front-page story in the Dec. 7 issue of *OCN*, construction funding for the interchanges is on indefinite hold because of state budget shortfalls. Flohr said the Baptist and Northgate interchange improvements have lower priority than other unfunded interchange projects such the Colorado Springs interchanges at Bijou and at Highway 24/Cimarron.

For more information on the Northgate and Baptist Road interchange projects, call Dan Hunt, CDOT or R.A. Plummer, PBS&J at (719) 520-5800 or visit the web site at www.interstate25.com. All of the presentation boards shown at the open house are posted on the web site.

Engineers
Estimate of
Probable
Construction
Cost

Conceptual
Design Level

October 8,
2002

	INTERSTATE 25 WIDENING NORTHGATE TO BAPTIST	I-25/NORTHGATE /POWER INTERCHANGE	I-25/BAPTIST INTERCHANGE	COMBINED
ITEM	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL
Construction	\$20,022,000	\$64,352,000	\$14,240,000	\$78,592,000
Construction Engineering	\$2,394,000	\$7,695,000	\$1,568,000	\$9,263,000
Right of Way	\$0	\$2,800,000	\$4,500,000	\$7,300,000
Utilities	\$584,000	\$3,753,000	\$382,000	\$4,135,000
Total	\$23,000,000	\$78,600,000	\$20,690,000	\$122,290,000



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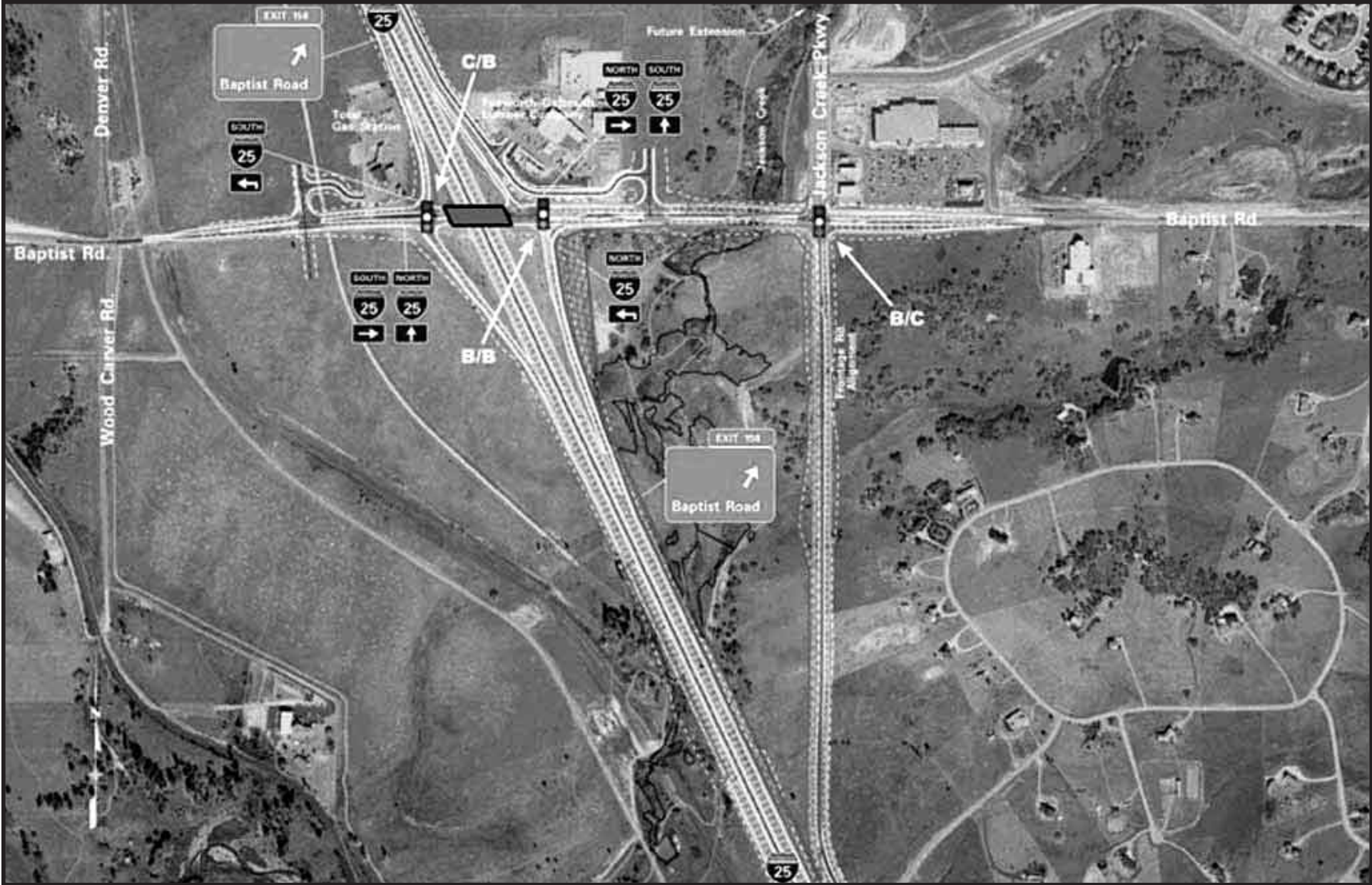
Window Tinting & Blinds



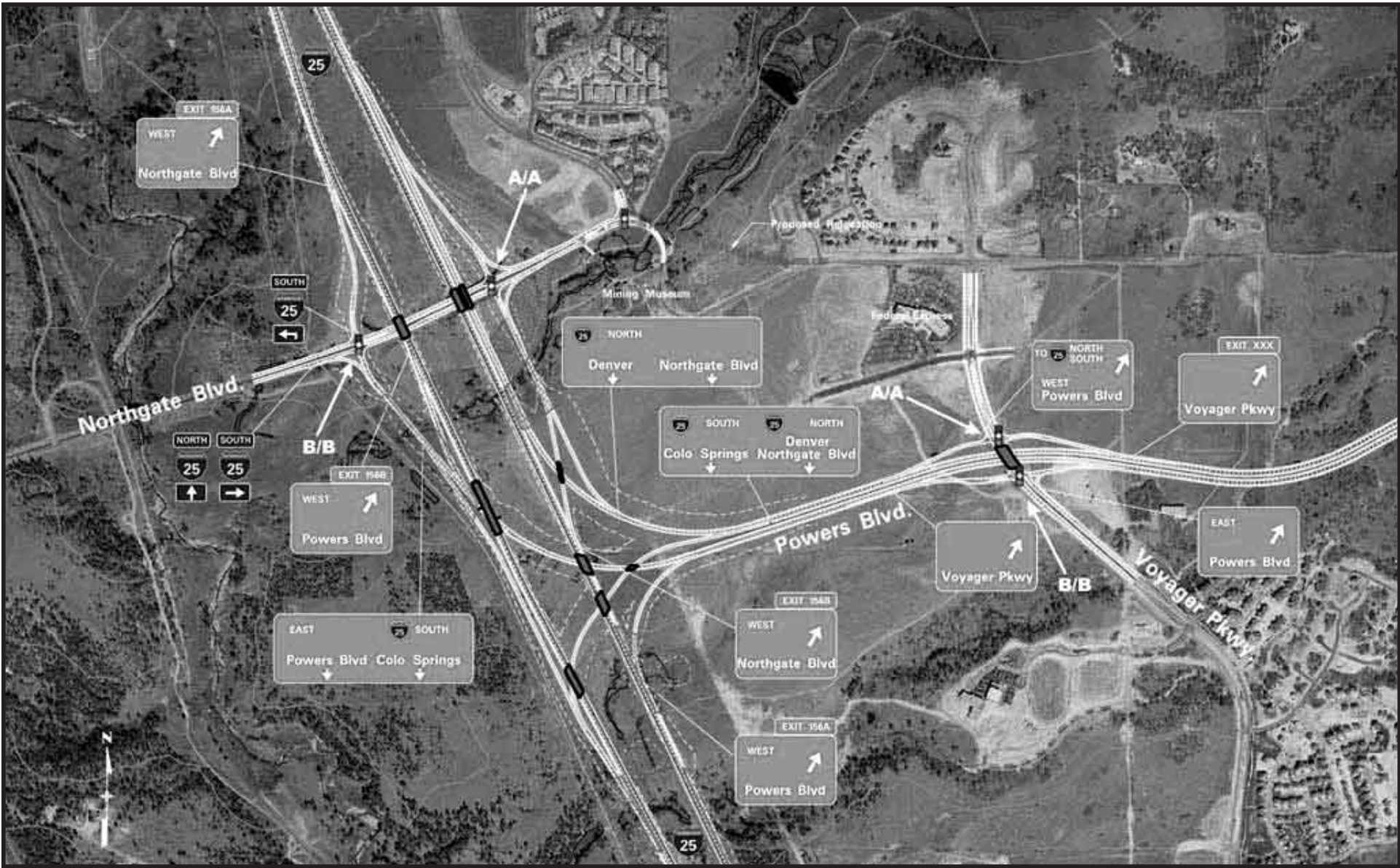
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Proposed Baptist Road interchange design



Proposed Northgate Rd./Powers Blvd. interchange design



Letters to Our Community

Letter Guidelines

Our Community News welcomes letters to the editor on topics of general interest. The *OCN* editorial board has established a policy that we do not knowingly print letters that have appeared in substantially the same form elsewhere.

Please include full name, home address, and day and evening phone numbers. A limit of 300 words is recommended. Letters may be edited for length, grammar, and accuracy. Send your letter to our_community_news@hotmail.com or mail to Our Community News, P.O. Box 1742, Monument, Colorado 80132-1742.

In response to recent problems receiving e-mail, if you send your letter by e-mail, we will send an e-mail acknowledgement. If you do not receive an acknowledgement, please call 481-4164 to confirm that we have received your letter.

Why Does Our RTA (Rural Transportation Authority) Smell More Like a RAT?

It's beginning to smell bad in northern El Paso County. BRRTA, Triview, Wal-Mart, the Phelan companies, Baptist Road, the right to vote, open public records, and the lessening of our democracy are all tied together. The odor began to get to me when I found out that BRRTA was charging \$500 for building permits and trying to collect about \$100,000 from our school district. When I started to look into why BRRTA thought they could charge these fees, I came across some disturbing information.

First, only two voters formed BRRTA (Baptist Road Rural Transportation Authority) in a mail-ballot election in 1997. The law says that BRRTA could be formed if a majority of the registered electors in their made-up boundary voted for it. BRRTA took that to mean they could gerrymander the district's boundary so that it would include only one property with voters. All of the other voters along Baptist Road were excluded. BRRTA is a pretty powerful entity. It can make up any fees, tolls, rates, and charges it chooses for the privilege of traveling on Baptist Road *"without the fees, tolls, rates, and charges being subject to any supervision or regulation by any board, agency, commission or official..."* BRRTA took that to mean they had the authority to create any fees they wanted. For instance, the Rural Transportation Authority Law says nothing about charging fees for building permits or fees for schools. BRRTA just made that up from the general authority to collect fees, tolls, rates, and charges for the privilege of traveling on Baptist Road. All of this power is based on BRRTA's one-property, two-person, husband-wife, voter theory.

Second, the records show that Triview paid its attorney, Peter Susemihl, to do the legal work to put BRRTA together. Triview is a metropolitan district that serves fewer than 600 ratepayers. Triview owes \$22 million to Centre Development, a land development company owned by Timothy and Tom Phelan, who also own the Jackson Creek Land Company, the dominant developer in Monument, and Colorado Structures, a construction firm that has had projects with more than 100 Wal-Marts. Jackson Creek is the main development in Triview and BRRTA's boundary. Triview's manager, Ron Simpson, says that their cycle of indebtedness could be broken if the Wal-Mart store is built east of the intersection of Baptist Road and I-25 (for more information, see story in the *Gazette* by Barry Noreen, 12/10/02.) Just to make sure everything went as planned, Simpson was appointed as the Designated Election Official in BRRTA's two-voter, mail-ballot thing (I refuse to call this an election.) No, I don't know what all this means yet, but it doesn't smell very good.

I went to BRRTA's office in Greenwood Village to see if I could determine from the public records what was going on here. Yes, Greenwood Village, two counties away in what most of us think of as Denver. Conner Shepherd, manager for BRRTA,

was irritated that I came to his office. He denied me access to the public records and sent me a nice letter that says in part, *"As I explained to you in person, if you would like to make a written request to examine public records of the Authority, I would be happy to accommodate the request in a timely manner. Please enumerate which records you would like to review in your request so the records will be available for your appointment. As I explained, some records might be in dead storage and may have to be retrieved from our off-site location."* Under BRRTA's rules, you would have to know which records you needed to review prior to making your appointment. If you find a suspicious trail in the records that you wish to follow, you would have to file another written notice detailing these records and make another appointment with Conner to look at these; and on and on forever, like those phone menu systems when you try to call any government office. This is not a set of circumstances that fosters democracy. Along with the right to vote, the ability to examine public records is the basis for keeping government honest and power in the hands of the people. BRRTA has managed to emasculate both of these basic principles.

Third, if you go to jacksoncreek.com on the web, you will see that they use the school district's excellent record as a reason to buy in Jackson Creek. There is nothing about Triview and the \$22 million or BRRTA and the unlimited ability to charge for the privilege of using Baptist Road. Would people buy property in Jackson Creek subdivision if they knew about Triview and BRRTA? What person in their right mind would buy a property that is served by Triview and incur the obligation of helping to pay off \$22 million through rates and fees? Would that same person buy a property in BRRTA's boundary and incur unknown fees, tolls, rates, and charges that are dreamed up by BRRTA, can be increased at BRRTA's whim, and are not subject to any review or challenge? Is this a good thing for resale value? What about full disclosure rules for real estate agents? Do they tell prospective buyers about the potential financial obligations that their properties could be forced to pay by Triview and BRRTA? Why would a bank loan money to these buyers in Jackson Creek? Aren't most loans sold in the secondary market? Do they not tell the secondary market buyers about Triview and BRRTA? I'm so confused.

I want my old democracy back, where we actually had the right to vote and public records were actually open for inspection by the public during regular business hours. I may have spent too much time on my couch watching West Wing and thinking, "Ain't government just swell," but I'm up off the couch now. We can't allow our democracy to turn into this kind of mess. You people on Baptist Road need to get up off your couches as well. There's a BRRTA headed for your wallet and you BETTA watch out!

Stephen C. Plank

Mr. Plank asked OCN to point out that he is the husband of Tommie Plank who serves on the Lewis-Palmer district 38 school board. The school board is contesting the BRRTA fee levied on Creekside Middle School.

Open letter to Carl Schueler, Assistant Director, El Paso County Planning Department regarding the Baptist Wal-Mart

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with my initial comments on the recent Wal-Mart Proposal to build a 24 hour/day Super Center on Baptist Road. As a resident of Monument living in Northern El Paso County I can unequivocally tell you that I DO NOT want a Wal-Mart store in this location. My reasons are as follows:

1. There is a Wal-Mart store 7 miles south on North Academy, Colorado Springs and a Wal-

Mart store 17 miles north in Castle Rock. There can be no other reason for building a Super Wal-Mart on Baptist road other than unrestricted greed by Wal-Mart, the County of El Paso and the Town of Monument. Wal-Mart will provide no additional services that are not already available in the local area. If one chooses to shop at a Wal-Mart all they have to do is drive 15 minutes.

2. The history of Wal-Mart is one of running the little guys out of business. The local community supports the local businesses which Wal-Mart will compete against. The only problem is Wal-Mart does not compete—it destroys the lifeblood of a community by removing choices.
3. The recent application by Wal-Mart is flawed and their zoning request change does not comply with established guidelines for a Planned Business Center (PBC) zoning.
4. Wal-Mart is dangling the potential of increased tax revenues to the county of El Paso with NO THOUGHT AS TO THE NEGATIVE IMPACT TO OUR COMMUNITY! A super Wal-Mart store will ruin the local area and will be a blight upon this beautiful part of the Front Range.
5. Wal-Mart talks a good story but the greater percentage of the merchandise on Wal-Mart shelves is not made in the U.S.A. "Always the lowest price" usually means always buying the cheapest.

I assure you that there is a groundswell of people who oppose this store, and the local community will fight with all its resources to stop this store from being approved, being built and going into commercial operation. There is no other option—as we care about our community even if our elected officials do not.

To the Mayor of Monument and the Monument Trustees—your duplicity in going to Wal-Mart with your hat in your hand begging to have them return to Monument is despicable and an outrage to the community you profess to service. Monument is NOT OPEN TO BUSINESS TO THE LIKES OF WAL-MART. Period.

Mr. Schueler—you should be prepared for quite a fight as the concerned citizens of the Tri-Lakes area band together to stop this store from being built. It is not needed nor wanted.

Lynn Feldmann

A Wal-Mart supporter speaks up

This is in response to Mr. Heiser's recent letter as printed in this newspaper opposing Wal-Mart and Mr. Biggs's views. My dictionary, (Oxford), defines "Bigotry" as uncompromising, dogmatist, inflexible, and biased. Don't all these words apply directly to Mr. Heiser's very own uncompromising views on Wal-Mart's locating near here? I certainly don't condone name-calling, but if the shoe fits, sometimes it has to be worn; I'm sure Mr. Heiser would agree.

But, putting that aside, I must admit my desire for a Wal-Mart to locate over by King Soopers is for purely selfish reasons. I want to save money on groceries, which make up the largest expenditure in our family budget.

May I say I did, indeed, live in a small town of 30,000 in Oklahoma; and witness (Horrors!) the coming of a Super Wal-Mart adjacent to one of the local supermarkets. One wonders how many have lived through such a harrowing experience. Also, (Horrors again!), that supermarket, along with the other two in town, had to lower their prices!! The local citizenry—myself along with them, were thrilled, needless to say.

Not only that, but all three supermarkets, and Wal-Mart, in that town, are still going strong. The local stores are also flourishing, as they supply (as Mr. Heiser so aptly pointed out) the niceties and

(Continued on page 19)

LETTERS (Continued from page 18)

specialties that Wal-Mart cannot, and does not. The town never had it so good! Truly, I was witnessing Free Enterprise at its best.

If memory serves me, isn't Mr. Heiser, together with the other Wal-Mart--protesting people, connected with those who fought against a YMCA coming to this community? Seems those folks were in favor of taxpayers footing the bill for a Recreation Center. Now, it would appear that we poor people are being asked once again to shell out the money for absurdly high-priced groceries offered up to us by our two noncompeting supermarkets, in the name of--What?? Selfishness on their part? Protecting higher prices--in the interest of Whom?

Would Mr. Heiser et al. prefer we ate CAKE? Thanks, but No Thanks, to Mr. Heiser. I'll get my BREAD at Wal-Mart, or wherever the prices are the lowest. The money I save can, and will, be spent at the specialty shops in Monument. Let the Bargains Begin, and the Good Times Roll!

Ruth Higgins
Lower Lake Road, Monument

Mr. Heiser never opposed the YMCA coming here. The Coalition of Tri-Lakes Communities took no position on the Tri-Rec ballot issues. - Editor

Open letter to the Monument board regarding the financial posture of the town

I write this open letter to you to help clarify the town's financial position as it goes into the new year. As the town's elected officials, you must be proud of the improving financial posture of the town. At the end of the year, the Town has more money in the bank than at the beginning. The 2001 audit shows the cash in the bank was \$3,419,111 (page 19) as of 31 December 2001. The end of November balance of all accounts in the bank was \$4,047,044 (page 24). This is over \$600,000 increase in the first 11 months of the year 2002.

This increase was accomplished during the year when substantive public works projects were undertaken: The Monument Lake Dam repair of \$3.5 million, the construction of 2nd Street to Highway 105 of \$700,000, the construction of the Old Denver Highway/Beacon Lite Extension for nearly \$500,000, and part of the new Jackson Creek Parkway from Higby to Highway 105 in conjunction with the Colorado Department of Transportation. In contrast to another governmental neighbor, the Town only modestly increased its debt by \$2 million to pay for its portion of the dam project. Most of the positive financial position of the Town revenues stem from previous boards deciding to impose impact fees on developers to have them pay their fair share for water taps, transportation impact fees, and stormwater drainage fees. For example, developers paying for water and sewer tap fees in the Town on average pay \$14,000 per single family house. For comparison, houses built in Tri-View Metropolitan District pay only approximately 60 percent of this cost. (Also, for comparison, Tri-View increased its debt over \$10 million in the last two years, without much public improvements to show for it.)

However, some confusion seems to exist regarding balances in the several funds the Town manages: the General Fund, the Water Fund, the Cemetery Fund, etc. In the documents prepared for the 2003 budget, the Town uses as beginning fund balances the information from the 2001 audit, which means the accumulated reserves number \$2,029,036 as of December 31, 2001. With the surplus of \$1,000,340 accumulated during the year 2002, the ending fund balance rose to \$3,029,376. But you have \$4,047,044 in the bank as of the end of November 2002. This is a discrepancy of over \$1 million. Where did this come from? How can you have \$4 million in the bank, but only \$3 million in fund balances?

The answer lies in the inaccuracy of the 2001 audit. Rather than laboriously tread through this report, one example that will account for most of this discrepancy. The following numbers come from pages 10 and 11 of the 2001 Audit. The Town received \$596,035 in service fees, but paid out only \$383,413 in expenses, gaining \$211,622. The Town received in Sales Tax revenue \$472,650, but paid out only \$315,383 (principal and interest), gaining \$157,267. The Town collected \$614,250 in water tap fees, but spent \$306,034 in capital improvements, gaining another \$308,216. (Note there are other expenses, but these three are the main ones to examine cash flow.) When these gains are added up, they total \$677,105, yet on page 11, the water fund balance decreases from \$1,820,961 at the end of year 2000 to \$1,556,468 at the end of year 2001, or almost \$264,493. What sort of odd accounting is this? (One thinks of Arthur Andersen and the ENRON nonsense.) Taken together, these two account for the almost \$1 million discrepancy above.

Most of the missing fund balances should be in the water fund, which needs to be increased by the above amounts. Further, I would advise closer scrutiny over whoever is doing the audits for the Town in the future. The Town has been challenged by lack of competent treasurers for many years, and this may have resulted in confusion concerning what should be in what fund balances for the Town. I advise that this should be resolved before you might make poor decisions based on incomplete or inadequate financial information.

Leon W. Tenney
Former Mayor, Town of Monument

Eminent domain used to benefit developer

On Monday, December 16, 2002, there was a resolution proposed at the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) meeting concerning the acquisition of private land by way of negotiated agreement or eminent domain.

It was obvious by reading the detailed documents attached to the proposed resolution (items 7 & 8 on the agenda) that Terry Harris and John McCarty were proposing that the BOCC enter into an agreement with King's Deer Development LLC, to take, by any means necessary, private property from landowners on the west side of Black Forest Regional Park for the Milam Road extension. The adjoining landowners received no notification of the fact that this would be voted on by the BOCC. It was just coincidence that the citizens affected by these resolutions were alerted to this action.

In our opinion, this appears to be a case of El Paso County seeking a way to go around the court ruling that prohibited the extension of Milam Road through the park. As the appeal of the original lawsuit will be heard at the end of January, the timing of this resolution was highly inappropriate. The BOCC has a standing resolution that required the developer to come back to the BOCC after the outcome of the litigation.

It is our understanding that the county has used eminent domain powers on only one other occasion, i.e., to secure an access road to Peterson Air Force Base. It is ludicrous that the county would claim that the extension of Milam Road is necessary for the public good. The proposed road extension would terminate within Cathedral Pines for the term of approximately 45 years as its terminus is at the boundary of a conservation easement. To use this method of land seizure for no other purpose than to service a private development and to put it in the same category as a seizure of property for a military installation is absurd. The use of eminent domain was designed for extreme circumstances where it could

be substantiated that it met the requirements as "really necessary" for the public good. This fails to even come close to measuring up to that standard.

The county has chosen to use its extreme power of eminent domain to condemn private property for the construction of a road that goes to one development. Based on the terms of the agreement between the developer and county, the settlement costs and a portion of the legal fees are to be paid by the developer. Additionally, the developer retains the right to approve any agreements reached with a landowner. This seems to beg the question: Can private property in El Paso County be condemned and then sold to the highest bidder?

No public safety issues are involved in this land seizure and, in fact, a road through the park increases the risk of fire to the park and surrounding homes. The county would have you believe that a road is needed to provide wildfire protection within the park. Testimony at the original trial by Bill Nelson of the U.S. Forest Service, showed that the park property, even if expanded, was too small of a parcel to need a road for wildfire protection. The existing trails through the park are wide enough for access of the fire department's brush vehicles. Presentations at the original BOCC hearing also pointed out the risk to children, adults, wildlife and domestic animals of running a high-speed road through a public recreation area.

The county commissioners voted 4-1 for approval of this resolution, with Jeri Howells being the only "no" vote. We would encourage everyone to contact the county commissioners to denounce this action. Regardless of how you may have felt on the previous lawsuit, consider how you would react if your own private land, your home, and your way of life were being threatened. (in the case of one homeowner, it would amount to approximately one-third of his property). If the BOCC will not stop this action, then we encourage you to vote to recall the two commissioners who voted for this action.

The county has been assessed over \$18,000 in expenses incurred during the last trial. If the landowners directly affected by this condemnation choose to fight it in court, the county faces the risk of being assessed the full costs of this litigation—not just the expenses that were a small proportion of the previous trial costs. In addition, if the county should proceed with this plan as proposed, the county has agreed to pay up to \$200,000 in fiscal year 2003 from the road and bridge fund, with no cap on its spending for this project in future years. How can the county justify these costs to taxpayers to support a private developer?

Franklyn Blaha
Gary Schinderle

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Between The Covers at the Covered Treasures Bookstore

What we're reading

By Judith Pettibone

"There's only one thing better than reading a book and that's talking about what you have read." (Book Club member) Indeed, it is certainly that sentiment that fuels the current popularity of book clubs. While Oprah may have put book clubs in the national limelight, there were flourishing clubs long before her first pick changed national reading habits. Not only do we have neighborhood groups but we have national groups via The Today Show and Good Morning America. There are on-line groups and city and statewide reads. There are even consultants to help clubs find the right books to read and the right organizational style for their meetings. Non-Oprah book clubs have created best-sellers. So what's all the fuss?

Ask that question to loyal book clubbers and they might respond that attending a book club meeting is both entertaining and educational. A shared reading experience is unique and when there are several people, it can expand your pleasure or knowledge of a book substantially.

Book clubs are organized in many different

ways, with most groups getting together once a month. Some meet for one hour, some serve food. Some have designated leaders while others have a free-for-all. Other groups do research on the author, and some rank the books at the beginning of the meeting and again at the end. Clubs may read in themes, while some read all fiction or all nonfiction. Some groups have names. We estimate that there are more than a dozen book groups in the Tri-Lakes region alone. And what are we reading?

Here are several favorites from the past few months:

Fiction

Bel Canto by Ann Patchett, \$13.95

An atmospheric tale of captivity and what happens to captors and captives alike. Set in a fictitious, contemporary Latin American country, a group of prestigious guests of the government are mistakenly taken hostage. The novel explores love under the most unusual circumstances and, in an intriguing way, the power of music. A Book Sense* bestseller and a popular choice of book clubs nationwide.

Empire Falls by Richard Russo, \$14.95

The most recent Pulitzer Prize-winner for literature, *Empire Falls* is a worthy addition to the American fascination with small towns. This contemporary drama focuses on the lives of several residents of a failing Maine mill town and the effects of history and revenge on those occupants. The characters are lovingly developed, leaving readers fantasizing about being the casting director for the inevitable film.

Girl with a Pearl Earring by Tracy Chevalier, \$13.00

Girl in Hyacinth Blue by Susan Vree-land, \$12.00

Some groups have discussed these separately and others have read them together. Either way, they have been popular book group choices. *Pearl Earring* is a fictional account of how one of Vermeer's most famous paintings was created. You meet Vermeer and his subject and get a feeling for the period. *Hyacinth Blue*, in the spirit of the *Red Violin*, traces the history of one of Vermeer's paintings through several owners. Both books have been extremely popular choices for historical fiction.

The Sparrow by Mary Doria Russell, \$12.95

Both a cultural and biological anthropologist, Russell brings her academic discipline to this exploration of an alien culture. In a first-contact fashion, Earth receives what seems to be music from another planet. A Jesuit mission is launched with biologists, linguists, and, of course, priests. A fascinating exploration of both an imaginary culture

and the unintended consequences of what seems to be a very minor act. There are no wishy-washy opinions on this book.

Nonfiction

John Adams by David McCullough, \$18.95

Widely praised by everyone, this national best-seller is said to be the "best biography of Adams ever written." - New York Times. It is consistently described as lovingly written and painstakingly researched. Someone described McCullough's prose as cantering ... what an engaging compliment. Because of its length, some groups read it over a two-month period.

The Orchid Thief by Susan Orlean, \$14.00

The inspiration for the upcoming film *Adaptations*, this book is a compelling tale of obsession. It's based on a short article she read about a fellow arrested in Florida for poaching a rare orchid. From this snippet, she spins a story that includes the history of orchid collecting and the obsession that seems to take over those smitten. Victorians lost their lives in search of the rare orchid, and it is not easy to imagine folks so wrapped up in their orchids that they take separate vacations!


Seabiscuit by Laura Hillenbrand, \$15.95

A surprising best-seller about a famous racehorse has become a popular book club choice even for groups that read only fiction. It opens in a compelling way by telling you that in 1937, Seabiscuit had more headlines in U.S. papers than Churchill, Roosevelt or Stalin. It is hard to imagine a racehorse so capturing the imagination of a country—and yet, this horse did just that. Excellent background on the jockey, owner and trainer and the lives of such men make this a wonderful read.

Enjoy your club. Join a club. Start a club. There are no rules except loving to read and finding other like-minded spirits. Covered Treasures will be starting a quarterly on-line book club newsletter. Care to join? Send us an email at ctbookclub@aol.com.

*Not Book Sense savvy? Watch for February's column.

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High Country Highlights

Tips for a healthy bird feeding station

By Woody Woodworth
High Country Feed & Garden

Bird feeding provides enjoyment to millions of North Americans each year. When proper feeding methods are followed, humans and birds derive benefits from feeders. However, recent research on the impact of bird feeding has shown that feeders can sometimes be a source of disease for the birds visiting them. There is good news, too: With minimal effort, any feeder operator in North America can provide a safe, healthy feeding station for birds.

Here are some useful tips and techniques for maximizing your bird-feeding enjoyment compiled by the editors at *Bird Watcher's Digest*:

- Give your seed feeders (especially thistle and tube feeders) a shake before you refill them, to dislodge any compacted seed. Dump out any wet clumps of old seed.
- Clean all hulls off platform feeders and out of seed trays daily.
- Keep some old spatulas and brushes handy by the feeding station for cleaning purposes.
- Disinfect feeders by scrubbing with a weak bleach solution (1/4 cup of bleach to 2 gallons of warm water) every few weeks, more often in summer or rainy periods. Rinse and allow feeders to dry before refilling.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after filling or cleaning your feeders.
- Move your feeding station when the ground beneath it becomes covered with seed hulls and droppings. Rake the old site to remove hulls and to give the grass a chance to recover.
- Store your seed in a clean, dry, air-tight container, such as a metal or plastic garbage can.
- Don't allow large amounts of seed to become wet, as on platform feeders. Instead, when it's wet outside, feed primarily from covered feeders that will keep seed dry, or put out only a handful of seed at a time on platforms.
- Don't put hulled sunflower hearts (or bits) out where wet weather can cause them to spoil. Offer them in a tube or hopper feeder.
- Don't put out any more seed than can be eaten by the birds by nightfall, especially where raccoons, opossums, bears, deer, or rodents are

a problem.

- If you see a sick or dead bird at your feeders, halt your feeding for a few weeks to allow the healthy birds to disperse. This lessens the possibility of disease transmission. Remove and discard in the trash any dead birds. Report the sick birds to your local wildlife officials, many of whom monitor wildlife health.
- If you provide suet, reduce the amount you offer in hot weather. Heat can make suet rancid and unhealthy for birds. Runny suet can also stick to birds' feathers, making them hard to keep clean and useful. Use rendered suet or heat-resilient suet blocks that are available commercially.
- Reduce window-kills of birds by placing feeders a safe distance away. If birds regularly strike a particular window, place a screen, crop netting, or a series of branches over or in front of the outside glass panel to break up the reflection.
- Though birds may not be entirely dependent on your feeder, it's best not to leave them totally without food if you plan to be away from home in mid-winter. Purchase an oversized feeder with a large seed capacity, or ask a willing neighbor to continue feeding your birds.
- Don't discontinue feeding as soon as the grass greens and the weather warms in spring. Many birds will continue coming to your feeders all summer long.
- Don't use grease, oil, petroleum jelly, or similar substances on your feeder poles or wires to thwart squirrels, ants, or other feeder-raiding creatures. If these substances come into contact with bird feathers, they are impossible for the bird to preen or wash out. Goopy feathers can become useless for flight or insulation, thus

putting the birds at risk to predators, extreme weather, and disease. For squirrels and other mammals, use a pole-mounted baffle (many are sold commercially). For ants, use an ant guard that prevents ants from reaching the feeder. Both baffles and ant guards are available in retail stores that sell an extensive array of backyard products.

Divine Order By Donna

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Monument's small town Christmas Dec. 7



The 5 Ripple children visit with Mr. and Mrs. S. Claus



The singing hayride--this group had spirit! They sang carols the whole trip around town.



Lora Hendricks, Alaina Bohler, and Renee Hames sang carols outside of the Catbird Seat



Students from Monument Academy sang "Silent Night" on 2nd Street



Crafts in Town Hall are sponsored each year by the Historic Monument Merchants Association. Vicki Elliot from the Office Center set up the crafts. In 2001 and 2002, Girl Scout Troop 393, with leader Cindy Petersen, helped out by teaching the craftmaking.



Bri Engel from Girl Scout troop 393. Cute turtles were one of the crafts the scouts taught children how to make



Kay Reuteler and Betty Wilson of the Monument Homemakers Club sold baked goods and plants.



Rachel Personett and Chelsey Hodge show penguins they made in the Town Hall

69th anniversary of Palmer Lake’s traditional yule log hunt

By Joyce Quintana and Lyne Lundquist
Photos by Lyne Lundquist

The village of Palmer Lake held the 69th annual Yule Log event on Sunday, Dec. 15, led by Master of Ceremonies Virgil Watkins. After a blessing from the Reverend Chris Taylor of the Little Log Church and the trumpet call from Tara Stone, the crowd set off for the hunt.

On the way, and on the return, they passed Sam Swancutt playing the bagpipes for them. Trail leaders Tom Allen and Tim Watkins led the crowd to the reservoir trailhead, where they announced guidelines and clues. In accordance with tradition, a log was previously cut, notched, tied with a ribbon, then hidden in the Glen Park area by Palmer Lake fireman Kevin LaBella.

While many went out for the hunt, others stayed inside the town hall to enjoy the program that went on at the same time. John Stansfield told a story and read an original story about the Yule Log. The Tri-Lakes Community Handbell Choir followed this with Christmas music. Then came a special tribute to longtime Palmer Lake resident Mildred Anderson, now 97 years old and still playing the piano. Mildred was a teacher at Palmer Lake Elementary School and wrote “The Palmer Lake Song,” which all the students there used to sing. Some of her former students, including David Quintana, sang the song in Mildred’s honor. To conclude the program, Ray Kilmer, former D-38 superintendent, led in the singing of carols.

Meanwhile, the Yule Log was found by two sisters, Jordan and Kendra Wuerth, of Black Forest. The crowd pulled the log, with Jordan and Kendra riding on it, up the hill to Town Hall, where it was cut in half. The log halves were carried in, and the traditional ceremony began, led by Patricia Atkins. The remaining half of last year’s Yule Log was kindled and half of this year’s Yule Log was added to the fire. The remaining half of this year’s Yule Log will remain by the fireplace for next year. Reverend Taylor presented the Christmas Story to the children. Then local children from the Wassail choir sang the Wassail Carol. Wassail was served first to the Finders of the Log, Jordan and Kendra, then to the Cutters of the Log, and finally to the guests on stage. To conclude the program, all guests in the hall drank a cup of the traditional wassail drink, toasting, “To your health!” What an inspirational tradition!



Kendra (front) and Jordan Wuerth found the yule log. Below left: Kendra and Jordan iding on front of the log as townspeople pulled the log up the hill to Town Hall for the ceremony.



A special tribute was paid to honor a Palmer Lake beloved citizen, Mildred Anderson. Ms. Anderson, 97, is a retired teacher and very active in the community

- The Palmer Lake Yule Log Association volunteers are:
- Presidents: David, Joyce, Danni, and Allison Quintana
- Yule Log Aficionados: Gary and Pat Atkins
- Secretary & Treasurer” Joan Steininger
- Trail Leaders: Tom Allen and Tim Watkins
- Log Cutter: Rich Kuehster and Kevin LaBella
- Wassail Makers: Duane Hanson, Rodger Voelker, Harry Krueger, Rollin Murphy.
- Lighter of the Log: Harry Krueger



Wayne Williams, our new county commissioner



By Steve Waldmann

For the last eight years, our County Commissioner has been Duncan Bremer. However, because of term limits, Bremer was not able to run for reelection last year. A man who did run, was elected, and will replace Bremer as the county commissioner from El Paso County District 1 is Wayne Williams.

On Nov. 5, 2002, Williams was elected to become our county commissioner. Our district, District 1, is essentially northwestern El Paso County. There are approximately 103,000 people in District 1. Williams became our commissioner by defeating fellow Republican Bill Guman in a primary election in August 2002. Williams won that election by approximately 1,140 votes. After that, in the general election in November, Williams garnered 86 percent of the votes compared to 14 percent for his Libertarian challenger, Arthur Roberts.

At 8:30 a.m. on Jan. 14, 2003, at 27 East Vermijo, Williams will be sworn into office for a position that pays \$64,000 per year, and provides health insurance. The public is welcome to attend that ceremony.

Williams is 39 years old and a life-long conservative Republican. He is married to Holly, and they have four children. They have lived in Colorado Springs for ten years in a house in the Rockrimmon area. Like Bremer before him, Williams is an attorney. Once he is sworn in, Williams intends to spend about 40 hours per week as a county commissioner and 20 hours per week maintaining his employment law practice.

According to the web site from his campaign, (waynewilliams.info), Williams is an economic and social conservative who supports gun rights and is pro-life.

During his campaign, Williams stated that he wanted to keep taxes low, address the problems with the roads in El Paso County, and expand the county courthouse and the county jail. Now that he's elected, he'll have to decide how to solve those problems.

Williams believes it is essential that El Paso County expand the courthouse and the jail. In November, county residents defeated a tax increase proposal that would have paid for the jail expansion. Despite the defeat, or maybe because of it, within a couple of weeks after the election, the county commissioners decided to proceed with the jail expansion and a courthouse expansion and to pay for those projects with certificates of participation. Two of the commissioners who supported the expansion ideas, Chuck Brown and Tom Huffman, are the subjects of recall efforts for their actions. Williams supports the idea of using certificates of participation to pay for the expansions; however, he believes that the current county com-

missioners have not fully explained why the county needs an expanded jail and courthouse.

One of the major problems facing El Paso County is how to maintain and improve the approximately 2,000 miles of roads in the county. County Administrator Terry Harris and Commissioner Bremer have suggested that we should consider establishing a special improvement district in El Paso County that would levy a sales tax to pay for those improvements. Although Williams thinks that idea should be studied, he also believes that since we are currently experiencing difficult economic times, now may not be the best time to increase taxes.

El Paso County currently prohibits people from taking guns into county parks, including our own Fox Run Regional Park. However, Williams expects that prohibition to be eliminated once he gets into office. He feels that county parks are currently criminal safe-zones and that people should be able to protect themselves when they walk, jog, or attend their kids' soccer games in the park.

When he, and approximately 300 other citizens, attended the Wal-Mart informational meeting that was held at Antelope Trails Elementary School last fall, Williams heard residents' concerns about the proposed Wal-Mart. He believes that what happens on one side of Baptist Road affects the other side of Baptist Road. Therefore, Williams believes that the County Commissioners need to work more closely with other governmental officials, including those in the Town of Monument. Although he is not very concerned that a Super Wal-Mart store could harm other businesses in the Tri-Lakes area, he says he is willing to consider the impact that Wal-Mart would have on traffic and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Williams believes that an elected official needs to be visible and accessible. That is why over the last year, he has been seen at a great many meetings and other functions in our community. Last summer, he marched in both the Monument and Black Forest parades. Last fall, he attended the Wal-Mart informational meeting. He has often been seen at meetings held to discuss improvements to Baptist Road and the Baptist Road/I-25 Interchange. According to Williams, once he gets into office, he plans to continue attending area meetings. He also hopes to hold town meetings several times each year so he can hear the concerns of residents.

When he ran for county commissioner, Williams received approximately \$75,000 in campaign contributions. Although a large portion of those contributions came from developers and real estate interests, Williams believes he received the contributions because the people who gave them wanted to see him elected and thought that he was the candidate who was best suited to represent their interests. Williams does not believe that people donated to his campaign in order to obtain favors or access.

Williams welcomes input from our area. Once sworn in, his telephone number will be 520-6444. His address will be 27 East Vermijo Avenue, Colorado Springs, CO 80903-2208. His email address will be waynewilliams@elpasoco.com. Williams says that although his constituents may not always agree with him, he will listen to them and then make the right decision.

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Palmer Lake Holiday Decorating Contest winners announced

By Judy Barnes

The Palmer Lake Holiday Decorating Contest was jointly sponsored this year by Palmer Lake's Economic and Community Development Committee and the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts. This year, a dozen houses were nominated, down from 20 last year.

The prize for best house decoration went to David and Diana Grabenbauer, 598 El Paso.

In the "theme" category, the prize went to RaeAnne and Jacob Soles, 523 Park Hill. The Soles won second place in the "house decoration" category last year.

For yard decoration, the winner was Vernon Dreyer, 86 Lower Glenway.

For best use of materials, Thom and Eileen Facinelli, 189 Shady Lane, took the prize. They won second place for yard decoration last year.

Dave Cartlidge, 80 Columbine Street,

and Larry and Mary Meyer of the Pillsbury House, 319 Glenside, also won prizes for their decorations.

Judges from the art center, Sandy Kinchen, Donn Ravers, and Jackie Ravers, chose the winners based on the spirit of the decorations. Sandy said that it was a challenge to decide on six winners, as all the decorations were brilliant. She and the other judges found it a wonderful and enjoyable Christmas experience, right down to the snow that was falling the night they awarded the prizes. Winners received gift certificates for purchases at any Palmer Lake business.

Susan Miner, chair of the Economic and Community Development Committee, wishes to thank everyone in the community who decorated, especially the businesses that took the time to brighten Palmer Lake's main street.

Historical society hosts potluck dinner Jan. 16

By Roger Davis, PLHS Board Member

The Palmer Lake Historical Society meeting for January will be our annual potluck dinner. Bring your favorite old-fashioned American side dish or dessert. Meat dishes will be provided. The program will consist

of area old-timers recalling tales of the "good ol' days." Come one, come all. The historical society proudly serves all of the Tri-Lakes area. Join us at 6 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 16, in the Palmer Lake Town Hall, 54 Valley Crescent. Call 481-8623 for further information.

Clothing swap and women's clothing drive Feb. 22

Tired of wearing the same old look? Want to put some new style into your closet? Bring yourself and your professional and play clothes to the first annual clothing swap, hosted by Women Business Owners and Managers. Trade your items with other ladies and walk out with some great, nearly new clothing and accessories. If you don't want to trade clothes, donations are welcome and will be given, along with items remaining after the swap, to Tri-Lakes Cares and Dress for Success.

Jewelry, shoes, coats, hats, scarves, lingerie, suits, blouses, and casual clothing are

all appropriate to bring, share, and donate. All sizes are welcome and needed. Items must be clean and in ready-to-wear condition, on hangers with size tags.

Come on down to join the fun and help a good cause! Bring a beverage and/or snack to share, too. The swap will held on Saturday, Feb. 22, 12:30-3:30 p.m., at Sundance Studios, located at 481 Highway 105, Suite B200. For more information, call Karen, 487-8900; Kim, 487-7767; or Marylou, 481-3282.

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Friends of Ben Lomond sponsor Adventures for FUNdraising

By Sue Buell

The Friends of Ben Lomond (FOBL) will be sponsoring adventures to continue raising funds toward the purchase of the Ben Lomond mountain property just east of Palmer Lake. The type of adventure will depend on the weather, the leader, and the location—hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and biking are all possibilities. The fee will be \$10 per person or \$15 if you would like a SAVE BEN LOMOND T-shirt. The first 15

people to register with a credit card number either by phone or e-mail to the leader will have secure places for the adventure. A wait list will be started to handle cancellations. No-shows will be charged the \$10 fee. The schedule will be updated monthly in *OCN* and in flyers around town and specifically at the Palmer Lake Post Office and the Chapala Building in Monument at 2nd and Washington.

Mon. Jan. 13, 11 a.m. approximately 4 miles moderate. Pike National Forest eastern extension on Mt. Herman Road. Adventure to include Monument Rock. Leader: Cyndee Henson 719-488-1293 cnrhh@aol.com


Sun. Jan. 26, Noon approx. 6 miles moderate/challenging Limbaugh Canyon loop via Palmer Lake Reservoirs. Leader: Dave Roche 719-481-3550 rundaverun@cs.quick.com

Sat. Feb. 8, 10 a.m. approx. 6 miles moderate. Rock formations above 2nd Reservoir. Leader: Kay La Bella 719-488-5544 kaylabella@lycos.com

Mon. Feb. 17, 11 a.m. approx. 4 miles moderate. Pike National Forest eastern extension on Mt. Herman Road. Adventure to include the Firemen's Memorial Garden. Leader: Cyndee Henson 719-488-1293 cnrhh@aol.com

Sat. Mar. 8, 1 p.m. approx. 2 miles easy/moderate. Fox Run Regional Park. Leader: Barb Linnenbrink 719-481-2571 blinnen@d20.co.edu

Sat. Mar. 15, 10 a.m. approx. 4 miles moderate/challenging. USAFA Stanley Canyon. Leader: Sue Buell 719-481-2474 suebuell@earthlink.net



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NEPCO elects new board members

The Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO) elected two new board members in December. Bob Swedenburg, Gleneagle Civic Association, was elected as board secretary and Dave Swanson, Sun Hills, was elected as vice president. Both will serve for a term of two years. Dave is also the new chairman of the NEPCO land use committee. Steve Sery of Chaparral Hills will continue to serve as NEPCO's president for the coming year; and Glenn Scott will continue as NEPCO's treasurer.

A fifth board position remains vacant but could be filled in the near future.

The board will meet in January to discuss the NEPCO program for 2003. The first full NEPCO meeting for 2003 will be in February. Members will be notified as soon as details have been arranged.

For information, contact Steve Sery by e-mail, serys@usa.net or by phone, 488-0857.

OCN - The Web Site: www.ourcommunitynews.org

Our Community News maintains an extensive web site that includes background information on the paper and all the back issues. You can download all the issues or read them on-line.

The *contents/search* function takes you to a powerful search tool that can find all appearances in the back issues of any word or phrase. To save you time, the results show the context in which the word or phrase first appears on each page.

Hyperlinks are included in many of the stories so you can immediately go to the referenced sites or send e-mail to the various points of contact.

All this adds up to what we think is one of the best web sites around for Tri-Lakes area information. We think it will be become one of your favorites.

Next time you are surfing the web, we would love to have you stop by our site and then let us know how you like it and what we can do to make it better.



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2002 was a busy year for the Friends of the Black Forest Regional Park

By Gary Schinderle, President

Tree Planting: As in 2001, the Friends planted new trees in the park. This year, we combined donations and grant money to purchase and plant four 6-foot white fir trees. These were planted near the south parking area and the new playground area. Donations are being accepted in preparation for the 2003 tree planting.

Friends also planted one 10-foot white fir in memory of the daughter of a Black Forest family who lost her life in the September 11, 2001, tragedy in New York City. The family purchased, and the Parks Department installed, a memorial bronze plaque that was placed near the tree.

Web-site: Our new web site, www.friendsbfrp.org went online this summer. It contains information and pictures regarding the activities of the Friends. We will be constantly updating the site with information.

"Adopt-a-park": The Friends adopted the "active use" area of the park. Volunteers to assist with cleanup of this area are always needed.

BF Festival 2002 Booth: The Friends had a booth

during the BF Festival in August. A silent auction fund-raiser was held. Please start thinking of items that you are willing to donate for the 2003 silent auction.

Update on lawsuit: October 12, 2001, District Judge Samuelson ruled that the proposed Milam Road extension through the park was a violation of the Sisk Act and thus prohibited. By January 2002, the County Commissioners and King's Deer Development, LLC, appealed this decision. In July 2002, Judge Samuelson ordered the Board of County Commissioners to pay an additional \$5,983.10 and Kings Deer Development to pay \$11,926.70 in costs to Friends. However, those costs will not be awarded until after the appeal is concluded. These costs were only a small portion of the total costs and legal fees incurred in the original defense of the park. We are continuing to pay the original defense fees. Oral arguments for the appeal will be heard on January 27, 2003. Legal fees to support the appeal are projected to be an additional \$12,000. We still need your help!

Park Update: Barbara Nugent, Director of the

El Paso County Parks Department, has informed us that mistletoe mitigation will begin in BFRP in 2003. Firewood will be available from this effort. We will keep you updated when specific information becomes available.

Friends' logo T-shirts are for sale for \$10, and 2003 Day Planners are \$5. Call 495-1809 for information on obtaining these items.

Join or renew your membership in F.O.B.F.R.P. today. Membership is just \$10 per year per family. A membership form can be obtained by calling Gary Schinderle at 495-1809. Please also consider a tax-deductible donation. F.O.B.F.R.P. is a tax exempt 501(c)3 corporation.



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Second annual health and wellness fair Jan. 18

By Marylou Doehrman

Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce

The Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce and the Tri-Lakes Health Advocacy Partnership (HAP) are sponsoring the second annual "Punt for Health" health and wellness fair on Saturday, Jan. 18, from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. at Lewis-Palmer High School. The chamber's health and wellness committee is excited about the opportunity to educate Tri-Lakes residents about critical health care issues.

Last year's fair brought in more than 180 people who participated in health care screenings and perused 44 booths. The chamber's health and wellness committee is comprised of area health care professionals who promote healthy living concepts through the annual health fair and various educational seminars.

This year the Tri-Lakes Health Advocacy Partnership, a local organization that identifies health care needs in the Tri-Lakes area, such as domestic violence issues and matters that affect the elderly in our community, volunteered to co-sponsor the event.

Since the fair is held one week prior to Super Bowl Sunday, the health and wellness committee adopted the theme "Punt for Health." Visitors to

the fair will intercept health care professionals, from personal trainers to massage therapists and chiropractors. Representatives from the American Heart Association and tobacco prevention programs will be on hand to tackle your needs. Score yourself on the following health care screenings: cholesterol, hearing, body-fat measurement, bone density, blood pressure, and depression.

Dagny's Restaurant and Karma Kitchens will be in the line-up, too, if you are interested in purchasing a healthy lunch or snack. If you touchdown at the fair on Jan. 18, your entrance fee is just \$1 and all health screenings are free. Kick off your New Year right with this healthy community event!

Contact the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce for more information: 481-3282.

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TLCA winter art classes start Jan. 27

The Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts winter art class schedule is now available. More than twenty classes for all ages—including pottery, painting, drawing, and dramatic arts—begin January 27. Schedules are available on-line at www.trilakesarts.com, or pick up a copy at TLCA. Register by phone or mail. Open registration takes place on Jan. 7 and Jan. 11 at The Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts, 304 Highway 105, Palmer Lake. Call 481-0475 for more information.

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How to avoid becoming a cybercrime statistic

By Michael Lines, CISSP

So, you just got a new computer for Christmas, and you have decided that now is the time to join the world of high-speed internet. Before you jump into this new world, take a moment to consider these two statistics.

- 1) According to a leading internet security organization, an unprotected computer attached to a high-speed internet connection will be compromised in less than 24 hours, and
- 2) According to the latest Federal Trade Commission's figures, identify theft is the most popular and growing form of consumer fraud, in part because it is the most profitable. ID thieves stole nearly \$100 million from financial institutions last year, or an average of \$6,767 per victim.

To top it off, the new Bugbear virus that has already spread rapidly around the world in the past few weeks has a vicious payload. It can compromise secure transactions and passwords, make computers vulnerable to hackers, disable anti-virus software, and distribute potentially confidential e-mails. The Bugbear virus is just one of the thousands of new viruses and worms that appear every year.

Suddenly the ability to download music and play interactive games is not looking so enticing! But don't swear off the internet or return your new computer just yet. You can safely surf the internet if you take some precautions BEFORE you make that high-speed connection. These include:

- An up-to-date and active anti-virus program. A surprising number of people believe that they are protected, when in fact their anti-virus software is not activated, does not have current virus definitions, or is out of date. In addition, not all anti-virus programs are the same. Just because it is popular or came with your computer does not mean it is the most effective.
- A software or hardware firewall. This is one of the most critical components besides an anti-virus program, because it helps defend against hackers breaking directly into your computer. There are a variety of options available that depend on your budget and on whether you have a network of computers or a single computer. Though firewalls have improved greatly in terms of user friendliness, they are still somewhat sophisticated

tools and you can inadvertently open yourself to hackers if you are not careful.

- Windows 2000 or XP. If you have not yet upgraded to these latest versions of Windows Operating Systems, do so now. They have much stronger internal protection than Windows ME, 98, or 95. Once installed, they need to be updated on a regular basis with patches that come out from Microsoft—on average about two a week—to repair security holes that have been discovered. Check first to make sure your existing computer equipment has sufficient processing power, disc space, and memory to install these upgrades. In some cases, it is cheaper to just buy a whole new computer rather than try and upgrade an older one, especially if it is more than two years old. If you just bought a new computer, it probably came with Windows XP, though it will need numerous security updates applied to it as soon as you connect to the internet.
- A backup program and a schedule for using it. Whether you decide on tape, external hard disc, CDs, or some other method, the most important aspect of backups is that you make them on a regular basis. An unused backup program is no use at all.
- Turning your computer off when you are not using it. I've yet to hear of a case where a computer has been hacked remotely when it was not turned on!

While there are many other aspects to consider if you are a heavy internet user, such as local data encryption, email security, privacy, content filtering, and anti-spam, taking the precautions above will go a long way toward ensuring that you will not be robbed or mugged in cyberspace. Just like physical protection of your home, you want to make your computer hard enough to break into that hackers will move on to easier targets. For recommendations on programs that help keep your computer and personal information secure, check out the free tech tips library at www.pc-help.net.

Michael Lines is the principal security consultant for PC-Help.Net, a local company specializing in the setup and support of secure and reliable computing environments for small businesses, nonprofit organizations, and individuals. He can be reached at mlines@pc-help.net or (866) 384-7271.

PC-Help.Net also holds free seminars on internet security. Write or call for a current schedule or sign up for the free security and tech tips newsletter.

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Inserts

If instead of having your ad printed in the paper, you would like to have your advertising circular inserted in and distributed with *OCN*, the cost is \$30 per 1,000 (\$0.03 per item). For our full print run of 10,000, the cost is \$300.

Policy

Advertising rates are subject to change without notice. *Our Community News* reserves the right to determine which ads will be published. In support of our effort to promote Tri-Lakes area businesses we do not accept advertising from outside the Tri-Lakes area.

The OCN Story

Even though this is our twenty-second issue, some of you may not have seen *OCN* before, so some explanation is in order.

Background

Our Community News was launched in June 2001 by a group of Tri-Lakes area residents after concerns arose regarding coverage of Tri-Lakes area news. Many stories, including the proposed Wal-Mart supercenter project and the Monument recall election, were being given scant or biased coverage by the local media. While the primary local newspaper covered service clubs, etc., it did not publish a calendar of upcoming public meetings. Residents only heard about major decisions after the meetings had been held. We concluded there was an urgent need to provide residents information so they could get involved in the public process of addressing the significant issues facing the Tri-Lakes area.

Unlike the major local newspaper that is staffed largely by people who live outside the Tri-Lakes area, everyone at *Our Community News* lives or owns a business in the Tri-Lakes area.

***Our Community News* is an all-volunteer effort.** The ad revenue is used to pay for the cost of printing the paper.

Mission

Our mission is to give Tri-Lakes area residents:

- Accurate, objective community-based and area-wide news to help them reach sound conclusions and contribute to a successful future for our area
- A forum for the free exchange of ideas and opportunities that may impact their daily lives
- A guide to Tri-Lakes area shopping through Tri-Lakes-focused classified and commercial advertising

What We Ask of You

We ask that you take the time to go to public meetings and get the facts first-hand. We want to hear from you. Send your thoughts to our_community_news@hotmail.com or P.O. Box 1742, Monument, CO 80132-1742.

This is your community and your voice matters. You can make a difference by working to ensure that we hold on to the things we love about living here.

And, we ask that you support our advertisers. Their willingness to advertise in *Our Community News* makes free distribution of this newspaper possible. Please tell them you saw their ad in *OCN*.

Help Wanted

Our goal is for our volunteers to distribute this free newspaper door-to-door throughout the Tri-Lakes area. To meet that goal, we need your help to expand our distribution network. Here is that paper route you always wanted. No experience necessary, just a willingness to get out, get some exercise, and meet your neighbors. If walking is not your cup of tea, many of our routes can be covered from the comfort of your vehicle

If you like to write, here is your chance to have your work seen by thousands of Tri-Lakes area residents. Maybe you have an idea for an article or a column.

Like to take pictures? Want to justify to your spouse that fancy new digital camera? We need digital, slide, or print photos to illustrate future articles.

So don't just sit there, opportunity is knocking. Give us a call, drop us a note, or send us an e-mail.

OCN is published by all-volunteer, non-profit

Our Community News, Inc.

P.O. Box 1742

Monument, Colorado 80132-1742

Points of Contact

Editorial Content:

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481-4164,

our_community_news@hotmail.com

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John Heiser, Advertising Editor

488-9031, FAX 488-3455

j.heiser@ieee.org

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Our Community Calendar

Although we strive for accuracy in these listings, you are strongly urged to double-check the time and place of any event you wish to attend by calling the info number for that event.

GOVERNMENTAL BODIES

- **Monument Board of Trustees Meeting**, Mon., Jan. 6, 6:30 p.m., Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd St. Normally meets the first and third Mon. each month. Info: 481-2954.
- **El Paso County Water Authority**, Wed., Jan. 8, 9 a.m., 27 E. Vermijo, 3rd Floor Hearing Room. Rescheduled due to conflict with New Year’s Day. Normally meets the first Wed. each month. Info: 520-6300.
- **Monument Planning Commission**, Wed., Jan. 8, 6:30 p.m., Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd St. Normally meets the second Wed. each month. Info: 481-2954.
- **Palmer Lake Planning Commission Workshop**, Wed., Jan. 8, 7 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 54 Valley Crescent. Normally meets the second Wed. each month. Info: 481-2953 or visit www.ci.palmer-lake.co.us.
- **Palmer Lake Town Council Meeting**, Thu., Jan. 9, 7 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 54 Valley Crescent. Normally meets the second Thu. each month. Info: 481-2953 or visit www.ci.palmer-lake.co.us.
- **Larkspur Planning Commission Meeting**, Mon., Jan. 13, 6:30 p.m., Larkspur Town Hall, 9524 Spruce Mountain Road. Normally meets the second and fourth Mon. each month. Info: 303-681-2324.
- **County Parks Advisory Board Meeting**, Tue., Jan. 14, 1:30 p.m., County Building, 27 E. Vermijo, Colorado Springs. Info: Rich Havel, parks planning staff, 520-6985, richhavel@elpasoco.com, www.elpasoco.com/parks, or board secretary Cindy Olson, 520-6999.
- **Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District Board Meeting**, Tue., Jan. 14, 1 p.m., Conference Room, District Headquarters Building 1845 Woodmoor Drive. Normally meets the second Tue. each month. Info: 488-2525.
- **Monument Public Works Committee**, Wed., Jan. 15, 6:30 p.m., Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd St. Rescheduled due to conflict with New Year’s Day. Normally meets the first Wed. each month. Info: 481-2954.
- **Monument Comprehensive Plan Update Review**, Wed., Jan. 15, 6 p.m., Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd St. Info: 481-2954.
- **Palmer Lake Planning Commission Meeting**, Wed., Jan. 15, 7 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 54 Valley Crescent. Normally meets the third Wed. each month. Info: 481-2953 or visit www.ci.palmer-lake.co.us.
- **Woodmoor Improvement Association Board Meeting**, Wed., Jan. 15, 7 p.m., Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Drive. Normally meets the first and third Wed. each month. Info: 488-2694 or visit www.woodmoor.org.
- **Board of County Commissioners Land Development Code Work Session**, Thu., Jan. 16, 2 p.m., County Building, 27 E. Vermijo, Colorado Springs. The entire current Land Development Code is at www.elpasoco.com/planning/LDC/. Questions and suggestions for improvements to the LDC should be sent to Mark Gebhart, 27 E. Vermijo, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80903-2208, 520-6300, or MarkGebhart@elpasoco.com.
- **Larkspur Town Council Meeting**, Thu., Jan. 16, 6 p.m., Larkspur Town Hall, 9524 Spruce Mountain Road. Normally meets the third Thu. each month. Info: 303-681-2324.
- **Lewis-Palmer School District 38 Board Meeting**, Thu., Jan. 16, 7 p.m., Lewis-Palmer

- Administration Building, 2nd and Jefferson. Normally meets the third Thu. each month. Info: 488-4700.
- **Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District Board Meeting**, Tue., Jan. 16, 7 p.m., conference room at Tri-Lakes Station 1, 18650 Highway 105 west of Monument near the bowling alley. New day: Normally meets the third Thu. each month. Info: 481-2312.
- **Baptist Road Rural Transportation Authority Meeting**, Fri., Jan. 17, 1:30 p.m., 27 E. Vermijo, 3rd Floor Hearing Room. Info: Conner Shepherd, BRRTA Manager, 303-779-4525, connershepherd@cliftoncpa.com.
- **Monument Board of Trustees Meeting**, Mon., Jan. 20, 6:30 p.m., Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd St. Normally meets the first and third Mon. each month. Info: 481-2954.
- **El Paso County Planning Commission**, Tue., Jan. 21, 9 a.m., 27 E. Vermijo, 3rd Floor Hearing Room. Normally meets the third Tue. and optionally the fourth Tue. each month. Info: 520-6300.
- **Monument Parks and Landscape Committee**, Tue., Jan. 21, 6:30 p.m., Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd St. Normally meets the third Tue. each month. Info: 481-2954.
- **Triview Metropolitan District Board Meeting**, Wed., Jan. 22, 6:30 p.m., District Office, 174 North Washington St. Normally meets the fourth Wed. each month. Info: 488-6868.
- **Woodmoor-Monument Fire Protection District Board Meeting**, Mon., Jan. 27, 9 a.m., 1855 Woodmoor Drive. Normally meets the fourth Mon. each month. Info: 488-3303.
- **Larkspur Planning Commission Meeting**, Mon., Jan. 27, 6 p.m., Larkspur Town Hall, 9524 Spruce Mountain Road. Normally meets the second and fourth Mon. each month. Info: 303-681-2324.
- **Woodmoor Improvement Association Annual Meeting**, Mon., Jan. 27, 7 p.m., Lewis-Palmer Middle School, 1600 block of Woodmoor Drive. Info: 488-2694 or visit www.woodmoor.org.
- **El Paso County Planning Commission**, Tue., Jan. 28, 9 a.m., 27 E. Vermijo, 3rd Floor Hearing Room. This hearing will be held only if there are more items than can be completed on Jan. 21. Info: 520-6300.
- **Monument Police Advisory Committee**, Wed., Jan. 29, 6:30 p.m., Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd St. May be rescheduled or cancelled due to proximity to Thanksgiving. Normally meets the last Wed. each month. Info: 481-2954.
- **Monument Board of Trustees Meeting**, Mon., Feb. 3, 6:30 p.m., Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd St. Normally meets the first and third Mon. each month. Info: 481-2954.
- **El Paso County Water Authority**, Wed., Feb. 5, 9 a.m., 27 E. Vermijo, 3rd Floor Hearing Room. Normally meets the first Wed. each month. Info: 520-6300.
- **Monument Public Works Committee**, Wed., Feb. 5, 6:30 p.m., Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd St. Rescheduled due to conflict with New Year’s Day. Normally meets the first Wed. each month. Info: 481-2954.
- **Woodmoor Improvement Association Board Meeting**, Wed., Feb. 5, 7 p.m., Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Drive. Normally meets the first and third Wed. each month. Info: 488-2694 or visit www.woodmoor.org.
- **Palmer Lake Town Council Workshop**, Thu., Feb. 6, 7 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 54 Valley Crescent. Normally meets the first Thu. each month. Info: 481-2953 or visit www.ci.palmer-lake.co.us.
- **Larkspur Planning Commission Meeting**,

- Mon., Feb. 10, 6:30 p.m., Larkspur Town Hall, 9524 Spruce Mountain Road. Normally meets the second and fourth Mon. each month. Info: 303-681-2324.
- **Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District Board Meeting**, Tue., Feb. 11, 1 p.m., Conference Room, District Headquarters Building 1845 Woodmoor Drive. Normally meets the second Tue. each month. Info: 488-2525.
- **Monument Planning Commission**, Wed., Feb. 12, 6:30 p.m., Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd St. Normally meets the second Wed. each month. Info: 481-2954.
- **Palmer Lake Planning Commission Workshop**, Wed., Feb. 12, 7 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 54 Valley Crescent. Normally meets the second Wed. each month. Info: 481-2953 or visit www.ci.palmer-lake.co.us.
- **Palmer Lake Town Council Meeting**, Thu., Feb. 13, 7 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 54 Valley Crescent. Normally meets the second Thu. each month. Info: 481-2953 or visit www.ci.palmer-lake.co.us.
- **Monument Board of Trustees Meeting**, Mon., Feb. 17, 6:30 p.m., Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd St. Normally meets the first and third Mon. each month. Info: 481-2954.
- **El Paso County Planning Commission**, Tue., Feb. 18, 9 a.m., 27 E. Vermijo, 3rd Floor Hearing Room. Normally meets the third Tue. and optionally the fourth Tue. each month. Info: 520-6300.
- **Monument Parks and Landscape Committee**, Tue., Feb. 18, 6:30 p.m., Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd St. Normally meets the third Tue. each month. Info: 481-2954.
- **Woodmoor Improvement Association Board Meeting**, Wed., Feb. 19, 7 p.m., Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Drive. Normally meets the first and third Wed. each month. Info: 488-2694 or visit www.woodmoor.org.
- **Palmer Lake Planning Commission Meeting**, Wed., Feb. 19, 7 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 54 Valley Crescent. Normally meets the third Wed. each month. Info: 481-2953 or visit www.ci.palmer-lake.co.us.
- **Larkspur Town Council Meeting**, Thu., Feb. 20, 6:30 p.m., Larkspur Town Hall, 9524 Spruce Mountain Road. Normally meets the third Thu. each month. Info: 303-681-2324.
- **Lewis-Palmer School District 38 Board Meeting**, Thu., Feb. 20, 7 p.m., Lewis-Palmer Administration Building, 2nd and Jefferson. Normally meets the third Thu. each month. Info: 488-4700.
- **Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District Board Meeting**, Tue., Feb. 20, 7 p.m., conference room at Tri-Lakes Station 1, 18650 Highway 105 west of Monument near the bowling alley. Normally meets the third Thu. each month. Info: 481-2312.

LOCAL LIBRARY EVENTS

- **The Palmer Lake Library** hours are Mon. 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., Wed. 10 a.m. – 8 p.m., Fri. 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., and Sat. 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. 66 Lower Glenway. Info: 481-2587.
- **The Monument Branch Library** hours are Mon. - Thu., 10 a.m. - 9 p.m., Fri. & Sat, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., Sun., 1 - 5 p.m. 1706 Lake Woodmoor Drive. Info: 488-2370.
- **PPLD 100th Anniversary Open House**, Sat., Jan. 4, at all branches. See individual branch hours. Snack on cookies and sign a “best wishes” card that will be preserved in the library’s archives. Win a free bottle of Pepsi by being one of the first 100 people to use your library card that day. Info: 488-2370 (Monument) or 481-2587 (Palmer Lake).

- **Monument Library First Wednesday History Club**, Wed., Jan. 8, 1 - 3 p.m. Monument Branch Library, 1706 Lake Woodmoor Drive. The topic for discussion is the 16th Century. Participants are asked to read a book of their choice that pertains to that era. All adults are welcome to attend. Info: 488-2370.
- **Monument Library After School Kids @ Your Library, Every Mon.**, 4:15 to 5 p.m., Monument Branch Library, 1706 Lake Woodmoor Drive. Students in elementary school are invited to come to the library for games, crafts, book talks, storytelling and more. Info: 488-2370.
- **Monument Library Storytimes, Every Tue.**, For ages 3-7 at 10:15 a.m. and 11 a.m., Monument Branch Library, 1706 Lake Woodmoor Drive. Info: 488-2370.
- **Palmer Lake Library Storytimes, Every Wed.**, 10:30 a.m., Palmer Lake Branch Library, 66 Lower Glenway. Stories and more for toddlers and children. Info: 481-2587.
- **Monument Library Toddler Time, Every Thu.**, 10:15 a.m. and 10:45 a.m., Monument Branch Library, 1706 Lake Woodmoor Drive. A program for one- and two-year-olds (plus a caring adult) that introduces the delights of rhyme, rhythm, and a few special stories as a first step to reading. Info: 488-2370.
- **Monument Library Snuggle-Up Storytimes, Every Thu.**, 7 to 7:30 p.m., Monument Branch Library, 1706 Lake Woodmoor Drive. Children age three and up are invited to come in pajamas and bring a favorite cuddly to these evening storytimes for the whole family. Info: 488-2370.
- **TV Program: "Voices of Cripple Creek,"** Thu, Jan. 9 at 1,3,5,7,9, and 11 p.m., Adelphia Cable Channel 17 (Library Channel). This is the sequel to local historian Jim Sawatzki's Emmy-nominated video, "Treasure of the Cripple Creek Mining District." Info: 531-6333.
- **Palmer Lake Library Book Group**, Fri., Jan. 10, 9 a.m., Palmer Lake Branch Library, 66 Lower Glenway. The book this month is *The Red Tent* by Anita Diamant. Info: 481-2587.
- **Monument Library Teen Tuesdays, "Read-n-feed,"** second Tue. of the month beginning Jan. 14, 3-5 p.m., Monument Branch Library, 1706 Lake Woodmoor Drive. Discuss good reads with friends and food. Info: 488-2370.
- **Monument Library Teen Tuesdays, "Art 'Scape,"** third Tue. of each month beginning Jan. 21, 3 - 4 p.m., Monument Branch Library, 1706 Lake Woodmoor Drive. Dabble in the arts with creative new buddies. Info: 488-2370.
- **Monument Library Teen Tuesdays, Young Adult Advisory Council**, fourth Tue. of each month beginning Jan. 28, 3 - 4 p.m., Monument Branch Library, 1706 Lake Woodmoor Drive. Provide ideas and guidance for ongoing library programs for teens. Info: 488-2370.
- **Monument Library Teen Tuesdays, Writer's Workshop**, first Tue. of each month beginning Feb. 4, 3 - 4 p.m., Monument Branch Library, 1706 Lake Woodmoor Drive. Creative tips for catchy chronicles. Info: 488-2370.
- **Monument Library Grand Expansion Celebration**, Sat., Feb. 22, 1 p.m., Monument Branch Library, 1706 Lake Woodmoor Drive. The library is hosting a party with a 70's theme, so slap on your platform shoes, macramé belts, and smiley faces. It'll be groovy! Info: 488-2370.

For other library events, please check <http://ppld.org/communityconnections/calendar>.

OTHER EVENTS

- **Western Museum of Mining and Industry: "Donkey Wakeup Call,"** Fri. & Sat., Jan. 3 & 4, 9:30 to 10 a.m., 1025 East Northgate Road in Gleneagle on the Reynolds Ranch. It

can be reached from I-25 Exit 156a. Join in the morning's fun as donkeys Polly, Oro, and Nugget are led to their "play pen" for morning grooming and exercise. Afterward, enjoy a guided tour of the Museum. Info: 488-0880, www.wmmi.org, or e-mail: info@wmmi.org.

- **Western Museum of Mining and Industry: "Renew for the New Year!"** Sat., Jan. 4, 1 p.m., 1025 East Northgate Road in Gleneagle on the Reynolds Ranch. It can be reached from I-25 Exit 156a. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Reclaim! Explore the museum's mystery basket while learning to identify natural resources. Discuss recycling and see how the museum turns aluminum cans into donkey food. Wonder at the rocks that are in your home, clothing and pizza crust, and learn how miners recycle their mines. Finish your afternoon by making a recycled art project as a souvenir of your visit. Info: 488-0880, www.wmmi.org, or e-mail: info@wmmi.org.
- **TV Program: "Treasures of the Cripple Creek Mining District,"** Sun., Jan 5, 10 p.m., PBS Channel 12. Local historian Jim Sawatzki produced this Emmy-nominated video. Info: 481-3963.
- **Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts open registration for winter-spring art classes**, Sept. 7, 4 - 7 p.m. and Jan. 11, 9 a.m. - noon at 304 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Info: 481-0475.
- **Ben Lomond Gun Club, Tri-Lakes Chapter**, Thu., Jan. 9, 7 p.m., Tri-Lakes Fire Station 1, 18650 Highway, 105 west of Monument near the bowling alley. Normally meets the second Thu. each month. Info: 481-3364.
- **Western Museum of Mining and Industry Super Saturday**, Sat., Jan. 11, 1 to 4 p.m., "Dig Your Food!" Discover how geology, mining, and reclamation allow you to live a 21st Century lifestyle, right down to the rocks in your favorite food! Core drill a cupcake to examine its hidden layers and then compare it to geological stratification. Demonstrate mining techniques and mine recycling (aka: Reclamation!) as you play the cookie mining game. Come to the museum where we let you play with your food! 1025 East Northgate Road in Gleneagle on the Reynolds Ranch. It can be reached from I-25 Exit 156a. Reservations requested. Info: 488-0880, www.wmmi.org, or e-mail: info@wmmi.org.
- **FOBL ADVENTURES FOR FUNdraising**, Mon., Jan. 13, 11 a.m. A moderate 4-mile hike in the Pike National Forest eastern extension on Mt. Herman Rd, including Monument Rock. Cost: \$10, or \$15 with a Save Ben Lomond t-shirt. Info: Cyndee Henson at 488-1293, cnrhh@aol.com.
- **Women's Business Owners Luncheon**, Tue., Jan. 14, 11:30 a.m., Gleneagle Country Club. Kim Carson of Nationwide Floor and Window Coverings will discuss the "twists and turns of floor coverings, what are you really purchasing?" RSVP to Karen, 487-8900.
- **Palmer Lake Historical Society Annual Potluck**, Thu., Jan. 16, 6 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 54 Valley Crescent. Meat dishes provided. Bring your favorite old-fashioned American side dish or desserts. Hear area old timers recall tales of the good ol' days. Info: 481-8623. Normally meets the third Thu. each month. Info: www.ci.palmer-lake.co.us/plhs/ or 559-0837.
- **Tri-Lakes Health and Wellness Exposition**, Sat., Jan. 18, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m., Lewis Palmer High School, Higby and Struthers. Health Screening and Testing will be featured. A wide variety of health and wellness professionals will be on hand to give demonstrations and answer questions. Info: 481-3282.
- **MOMS Club of Monument New Member Social**, Fri., Jan. 24. New member socials are held the Friday before the last Wednesday of each month. A great opportunity for Moms

and Kids! Contact Amy G. at 488-1718 for information and directions.

- **Tri-Lakes Women's Club Luncheon/Meeting**, Fri., Jan. 24, 11 a.m., Air Force Academy Officer's Club. We will have a special speaker from Canine Companions for Independence. Reservations must be made with Kristen Kelly at 488-9581 or bajakmk@aol.com by January 20th. The Tri-Lakes Women's Club holds monthly meetings, September through May, and offers several interest groups throughout the year. All interested women living in School District 38 are invited to participate in the organization. Tri-Lakes Women's Club sponsors the annual Pine Forest Antique Show. Proceeds from this fundraiser benefit local non-profit groups. Information about TLWC is available at www.tlwc.net or by contacting Susan Shekerow at sjsdance@aol.com or Diana Woods at 488-3135.
- **TV Program: "Voices of Cripple Creek,"** Sat., Jan. 25, 10 p.m., PBS Channel 12. This is the sequel to local historian Jim Sawatzki's Emmy-nominated video, "Treasure of the Cripple Creek Mining District." Info: 481-3963.
- **FOBL ADVENTURES FOR FUNdraising**, Sun., Jan. 26, 12 noon. A moderate/challenging 6-mile hike to the Limbaugh Canyon loop via Palmer Lake reservoirs. Cost: \$10, or \$15 with a Save Ben Lomond t-shirt. Info: Dave Roche at 481-3550, rundaverun@cs.quik.com.
- **Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts winter art classes begin**, Mon., Jan. 27. Open registration is Jan. 7, 4 - 7 p.m. and Jan. 11, 9 a.m. - noon at 304 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Info: 481-0475.
- **Next issue of Our Community News**, Sat., Feb. 1. Published the first Sat. each month. Ad deadline is Wed., Jan. 22. Letter deadline is Fri., Jan. 24. Info: Editorial, Judy Barnes at 481-4164; Advertising, John Heiser at 488-9031 or www.ourcommunitynews.org.
- **Historic Monument Walking Tour**: Mon., Feb. 3, 10:30 a.m. to 12 noon, weather permitting. Meet at Limbach Park at the SW corner of Front and 2nd Streets. Tours will be given the first Monday each month, from Feb. to June. Guided by local historian Jim Sawatzki. Info: call Jim at 481-3963.
- **Monument Homemakers Club monthly potluck lunch**, Thu., Feb. 6, 11:30 a.m., Monument Town Hall. Normally meets the first Thu. each month. Info: Kay Reuteler, President at 488-3263.
- **Palmer Divide Quiltmakers**, Thu., Feb. 6, 7 p.m., Church of Woodmoor, Furrow Road. Normally meets the first Thu. each month. Info: 488-0074.
- **FOBL ADVENTURES FOR FUNdraising**, Sat., Feb. 8, 10 a.m. A moderate 6-mile hike featuring the rock formations above the 2nd Palmer Lake reservoir. Cost: \$10, or \$15 with a Save Ben Lomond t-shirt. Info: Kay La Bella at 488-5544, kaylabella@lycos.com.
- **FOBL ADVENTURES FOR FUNdraising**, Mon, Feb. 17, 11 a.m. A moderate 4 mile hike in the Pike National Forest eastern extension on Mt. Herman Rd. including the Firemen's Memorial Garden. Cost: \$10, or \$15 with a Save Ben Lomond t-shirt. Info: Cyndee Henson at 488-1293, cnrhh@aol.com.
- **First Annual Clothing Swap & Women's Clothing Drive**, Sat., Feb. 22, 12:30 - 3:30 p.m. at Sundance Studios, 481 Hwy 105, Suite B200. Women Business Owners & Managers are sponsoring this event. Donations and remaining items will go to Tri-Lakes Cares and Dress for Success. Info: Karen at 487-8900; Kim at 487-7767; Marylou at 481-3282.

To have your Tri-Lakes area event listed in Our Community Calendar, please contact John Heiser at (719) 488-9031, FAX (719) 488-3455, P.O. Box 1742, Monument, Colorado 80132-1742, or our_community_calendar@hotmail.com.

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PLENTY OF ROOM Nearly new and over 3,000 sq. ft. 5 BDRMS, 4 BATHS and a 3 car Garage. Lots of extras and upgraded Ceramic tile, air conditioning, island Kitchen, beautiful views of the mountains, finished walk-out Bsmt and huge lot in the Monument area! Excellent value! \$279,900



FABULOUS NEW CUSTOM HOME IN GLENEAGLE
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COLORADO CONTEMPORARY ON 5 WOODED ACRES IN BLACK FOREST Almost 6,000 sq. ft. of quality custom home with 5-6 BDRMS, 3-4 BATHS and 6+ car Garage with a separate 1 BDRM apt. above. This home offers a spacious gourmet Kitchen with large island and eating nook, huge heated sunroom with hot tub and built-in BBQ, finished walk-out Bsmt, 2 gas fireplaces, wet bar and dramatic Master Suite. Zoned for horses and has a 4 stall high quality Barn! \$635,900



A REAL TREASURE ON 5 ACRES IN BLACK FOREST This Low maintenance, beautiful stucco 4 BDRM, 3 BATH home offers a 3 Car garage, Office, island Kitchen, 2 gas fireplaces, hardwood floors, vaulted ceilings, large deck and patio for outdoor enjoyment, plus room to expand in the partially finished Basement. Zoned for horses with access to riding trail. \$374,900



SUNNY CONTEMPORARY HOME ON 5 FORESTED ACRES Great 4 BDRM, 3 BATH home with 6 Car Garage, workshop and heated studio/office. Beautiful granite countertops, island Kitchen, 2 gas log fireplaces, Master Suite with private Bath, 2 large decks, 7 skylights, vaulted ceilings, professionally landscaped, accent lighting, sprinkler sys. and more! Zoned for horses and near Black Forest Park too!!! \$399,900



LUXURIOUS RANCHER ON 5 WOODED ACRES WITH WATERFALL AND POND Nestled quietly in the pines of Black Forest. This home offers 5 BDRMS, office, 3 BATHS, and a 4 Car attached Garage. The private and gated grounds are highlighted with a large pond. High quality and low maintenance. Zoned for horses. \$599,900

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Questions? Call John Heiser, 488-9031



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- Sculpting
- Pastels
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- Improv. Comedy
- Clowning
- Storytelling

Register Early! Limited Enrollment.
Open Registration dates at the TLCA:
January 7, 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM
January 11, 9:00AM - 12:00 AM

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