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Our Community News

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

Issue #45 — Volume 4 Number 12 — Saturday, December 4, 2004

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Monument Town Planner Mike Davenport resigns



Former Monument Assistant Town Manager and Town Planner Mike Davenport (at the microphone) is shown (**top photo**) providing testimony during the May 2003 hearing on Kalima Masse's appeal of the denial of an application for a business license to restart operations at the derelict concrete batch plant on Highway 105 and (**bottom photo**) in 2002 working with the town committees tasked with developing the updated Monument Comprehensive Plan (Barbara Cole, President of consulting firm Community Matters, is shown standing at the front of the room). Davenport resigned his position with the town effective Nov. 19. Coverage of Monument meetings starts on page 14. *Photos by John Heiser*

To avoid a conflict with New Year's Day, our next issue will be delivered **one week later than usual:**

Saturday, Jan. 8

Ad Deadline: Fri., Dec. 24

Finished ads in electronic format are due by Fri., Dec. 31

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Visit our web site and read all the back issues at

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Circulation

Print Run: 11,200

Mail Delivery: 10,500

Stacks & Door-to-Door: 700

Our Community News

OCN is published on the first Saturday each month by all-volunteer, Colorado non-profit

Our Community News, Inc.

Advertising and Distribution

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P.O. Box 1742

Monument, Colorado 80132

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King's Deer house fire discussed at Tri-Lakes FPD board meeting, Nov. 18



By John Heiser

At the regular meeting of the Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District Board of Directors on Nov. 18, Chief Robert Denboske reported on the Nov. 13 King's Deer house fire on Bardsley Place pictured above.

(Continued on page 2)

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TLFPD (Cont. from page 1)

Denboske also announced that Station 2 is now open and in operation, although it was not open at the time of the King's Deer fire.

The board also held a hearing and unanimously approved inclusion of the 43 lots in Whistler Ranch Filing 2

and unanimously approved accepting a petition for inclusion of a 300-acre parcel east of Highway 83 on Hodgen Road.

At the end of the meeting, the board held an executive session to discuss pay scales and education and

training.

King's Deer house fire

Denboske reported that the Nov. 13 fire started in the attic and "had gotten a pretty good head start" before emergency personnel arrived. He noted that there were two injuries, but fortunately neither injury was major. One Woodmoor/Monument firefighter fell from the roof and suffered a broken elbow. Another injury occurred when the garage ceiling fell, striking a Tri-Lakes firefighter. He noted that the Tri-Lakes and Woodmoor/Monument engines ran out of water before the first tender (water truck) was set up.

OCN later learned the fire started because a joint in the chimney for the gas fireplace had rusted and leaked hot gases that ignited the roof.

Director and district treasurer John Hildebrandt said that based on this incident, the homeowner recommends that other homeowners install smoke alarms in their attics.

Hildebrandt added that the build-

er of the house inspected the damage and concluded the house could be repaired by replacing the ceilings and everything above them and by fixing the water damage.

Denboske said he has been asked whether having Station 2 open would have made a difference. He said, "I can't say it would have." He added that the districts involved in fighting the fire need to hold a meeting to review the incident.

Financial Report

Hildebrandt reported that as of the end of October, expenditures stood at 82 percent of the budgeted amounts, which is 1.3 percent less than the anticipated level at this point in the year. He said income stands at \$1.2 million, which is 92 percent of the expected amount for the year.

He then reviewed draft budgets for the district and the fire authority being formed with the Woodmoor/Monument Fire Protection District. He noted that some items in the fire authority budget are split 50-50 between the two districts, some are split 60-40 based on the assessed values of properties in the two districts, station expenses are split 1/3-2/3 based on the number of stations in each district, and some expenses are assigned 100 percent to one or the other of the districts.

Hildebrandt said the Tri-Lakes budget totals \$1.45 million and the Woodmoor/Monument budget totals \$1.11 million, so the fire authority budget is \$2.56 million.

He said the only items changed from the budget prepared by former Woodmoor/Monument district Chief David Youtsey were salaries and insurance. He added, "Due to the mismatch in accounting line items, we have to go for a year to see where we are."

He noted that a group insurance policy combining the Tri-Lakes and Woodmoor/Monument personnel would provide "more benefits at no or little additional cost to the districts."

Hildebrandt reported that year-to-date receipt of ambulance revenue is \$208,000; projected ambulance revenues for the year will be \$230,000 to \$240,000.

Chief's Report

Denboske reported as follows:

- During October, the district responded to 145 calls, bringing the total calls so far this year to 1,020, which is 9.2 percent greater than the same period in 2003. The 145 calls during October were as follows: 71 medical, 26 fire, 30 traffic accidents, 12 public assists, and 6 hazardous materials; 66 people were transported to area hospitals.
- The department has received an Insurance Services Organization (ISO) rating of 5 effective Jan. 1, 2005, in hydrant-equipped areas. This is an improvement from the

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prior rating of 6 set 15 years ago and now matches the ISO rating of the Woodmoor/Monument district. In hauled water areas, the district's rating is 9. Denboske said the next step is to get the hauled water rating reduced.

EMS Report

Ron Thompson, assistant chief and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Coordinator, reported as follows:

- The ambulance cots and stair-chairs purchased on a state EMS grant have been received. Personnel are trained on using the stair-chairs.
- Seven more residents have been trained and certified in CPR.
- Reports showing the status of ambulance service billing were presented to help the board track collection of ambulance revenue owed to the district. Thompson noted that the total for accounts 91-120 days in arrears has been reduced \$12,000 since last month. Hildebrandt noted that of the total \$170,000 outstanding, \$47,000 has been turned over to collection agencies and a significant portion of the rest requires obtaining payment from Medicare.

Station 2

Director and architect Rick Barnes, reported as follows on completion of Station 2 on Roller Coaster Road near Highway 105:

- The station is open and operational.
- There continue to be problems with the well pump. Water pressure relief valves are blowing. The well being used belongs to the Great Divide Water Company and is a deep aquifer

well. Barnes said the plumbing is being reworked to fix the problem.

- The fire pole is deflecting 18 inches when someone is on it. The specification was for a 6-inch deflection. The manufacturer, which is the only fire pole manufacturer in the country, is providing a replacement pole, but it is back-ordered.
- The lights are flickering.
- Due to problems with the water and electricity, Battalion Chief Bryan Jack described living in the station as "urban camping."

Inclusions

The board held a hearing on the petition for inclusion of the 43 lots in Whistler Ranch Filing 2. The petition was signed by all of the property owners and was unanimously approved.

The board also unanimously voted to accept a petition for inclusion signed by the owners of a 300-acre parcel on Hodgen Road east of Highway 83.

Executive Session

It was announced that the purpose of the executive session was to review pay scales and education and training matters.

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). In order to approve the 2005 budget prior to the required filing date of Dec. 15, the next meeting is scheduled for Dec. 9 at 7 p.m., preceded by a meeting of the fire authority at 6 p.m.

For more information, call Chief Denboske at 481-2312 or visit www.tri-lakesfire.com.

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Fire Authority Agreement signed; Harvey resigns, Nov. 4

By Jim Kendrick

On Nov. 4, before the boards of Woodmoor/Monument and Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District (W/MFPD, TLFPD) could vote on the creation of a fire authority to conduct operations in both of their districts, W/MFPD Secretary Bob Harvey resigned, saying he had been excluded from a series of executive sessions that had been held to form the fire authority. Harvey read his letter of resignation (which was dated Nov. 2 and published in the Nov. 6 *OCN*, stating he believes the firing of W/MFPD Chief David Youtsey was illegal. Harvey said he believes that the organization of the fire authority and selection of its leadership structure was also carried out in secret, in violation of state open meeting laws (often called "sunshine" laws) that require public meetings on issues involving special districts. He added that even he had not been included in these meetings. "You have excluded me as a board

member and constituents of the district in an inappropriate manner," he wrote.

After Harvey finished reading his letter, Sibell and TLFPD President Charlie Pocock said "Thank you, Bob," and Harvey left the building. There was no other response by any member of either board to his resignation or his list of charges.

The boards went on to approve a fire authority intergovernmental agreement (IGA) document and elect the officers of the fire authority without any opposition. TLFPD Treasurer John Hildebrandt then gave a detailed presentation on the fire authority's organization and staffing, as well as budget policies and procedures.

W/MFPD board member Jeremy Diggins did not attend the joint meeting. TLFPD board member Keith Duncan arrived after all of the votes were taken. As the IGA does not take effect until Jan. 1, 2005, the meeting could not be conducted as a fire au-

thority meeting; until then, they are considered joint board meetings.

Fire Authority agreement signed and personnel selected

Pocock said "We've been working on this project since June" and said they have been meeting in executive sessions with attorneys to draft the fire authority document, lending support to Harvey's assertion. "All board members have read and approved the fire authority document," he said. Pocock said he had gotten Duncan's proxy by phone before the meeting.

TLFPD first approved the IGA (4-0) and then W/MFPD approved it (3-0). After the agreement was signed, the four officer positions of the new fire authority were voted on, with only one candidate nominated for each position and no discussion. Officers are Pocock, chairman; Bob Hansen, vice chairman; Rod Wilson, secretary; and John Hildebrandt, treasurer. Rob Denboske will be the chief of the fire authority starting Jan. 1.

Hildebrandt then gave a lengthy presentation on the organization and finances of the fire authority. He said he worked extensively with former W/MFPD Treasurer Diggins and his recent replacement, Hansen, to align the Woodmoor/Monument financial spreadsheets to be identical to those of Tri-Lakes in terms of costs and line numbers.

The name of the fire authority was announced as Tri-Lakes Monument Fire and Rescue.

In addition to Denboske being named chief, the following fire authority positions have also been filled:

- **Assistant Fire Chief/Emergency Medical Services Coordinator:** TLFPD Assistant Fire Chief Ron Thompson
- **Fire Marshal:** W/MFPD Fire Marshal Tom Eastburn
- **Administrative Assistants:** TLFPD Administrative Assistants Linda Ousnamer and Paula Robbins

- **Battalion Chiefs:** TLFPD Battalion Chief Bryan Jack, W/MFPD Battalion Chief Larry Garner
- **Volunteer Coordinators:** TLFPD Volunteer Coordinators Ken Cox and Chip Fleming
- **Training Coordinators:** TLFPD Training Coordinator Mike Keough and W/MFPD Training Coordinator Joe Yordt

As is TLFPD operational practice, the assistant chief will also be the chief medical officer and a paramedic. A W/MFPD full-time firefighter wanting to become battalion chief for the TLFPD Roller Coaster Road station would have to become a TLFPD employee (or vice versa); then, if the fire authority were broken up, that firefighter would stay with the district that owns the respective station.

Hansen noted that he had "learned only last Thursday night" that W/MFPD Administrative Assistant Donna Arkowski would be staying on after Chief David Youtsey was fired on Oct. 26. However, when informed of Hansen's statement, Arkowski later said she had never indicated to anyone that she would be resigning prior to this joint meeting. Arkowski said she had been directed to not attend or record any of the public or executive session joint board meetings for the W/MFPD board, all of which took place at the TLFPD station.

A closer look at the numbers

Hildebrandt gave examples of different methods of cost sharing that he said were in-



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corporated into the IGA. No copies of the IGA were distributed at the meeting.

Costs that will be divided in a 2:1 ratio (Tri-Lakes has two stations, while Woodmoor/Monument has one) are those that directly apply to individual fire stations, such as cable TV. Costs that will be divided in half include legal costs for creation of the IGA and fire authority accounting costs. Tax-based costs will be divided in a 60/40 ratio, since the assessed value of property in the Tri-Lakes district is about 1.5 times that of Woodmoor-Monument; they will include office supplies and clerical staff work. Utility costs will be billed back to the individual district boards, which then funds the fire authority account that is owed.

He noted that district apparatus will be inventoried and become part of the fire authority's inventory. "If the fire authority breaks apart, it all goes back to where it came," Hildebrandt said.

In addition, he said, as of Jan. 1, pay will be made equal and insurance benefits will become equal.

"We're going to prove to the community that this is a good thing," Hansen said. "We're not doing anything we weren't doing before. We're bringing it all together. We're not going to lose anything—paramedics, the Woodmoor station. Whoever started these rumors is against the process."

Questions from the audience

Citizen questions were then answered primarily by Hildebrandt, with occasional additional comments from other board members as noted below. Some of the questions asked during the meeting were:

Why doesn't the assistant chief come from W/M? Since Assistant Chief Jim Rackl resigned, Woodmoor/Monument has had no assistant chief.

Will paid full-time staff from Woodmoor/Monument be assigned to a Tri-Lakes station? Not at this time. They will stay at Woodmoor/Monument unless they ask to be moved and hired by Tri-Lakes.

How will closest force response be performed? After the Roller Coaster station opens, Woodmoor/Monument will no longer dispatch its fire engine east of Furrow Road, but will continue to serve the Jackson Creek area, even though this area actually lies in the Tri-Lakes jurisdiction. Currently, the W/MFPD engine goes to all Tri-Lakes calls east of I-25 with no reimbursement by TLFPD for these operations. There will be no reimbursement to W/

MFPD for its engine's responses to Jackson Creek calls under the IGA either. The TLFPD ambulance serves the entire W/MFPD jurisdiction, with all revenues retained in the Tri-Lakes ambulance enterprise account.

Several board members indicated that this policy was normal mutual aid. However, mutual aid actually means that one county fire district requests assistance from another district after being dispatched. The current closest force response agreement between TL and W/M pre-arranges mutual aid between the two by having both districts dispatched simultaneously for calls in either district. Woodmoor/Monument does not compensate Tri-Lakes for its assistance to downtown Monument.

Is it true that the W/MFPD mill levy will not drop to 7.0 mills? Its mill levy will remain at 9.92 mills for 2005. That may drop perhaps a mill or half mill at a time, but it is hard to predict since the assessed value of property in W/M remains fairly flat, while it tends to rise in TL. It may never get down to 7.0 mills, and will depend on how much of the personnel costs for a completely full-time staff can be reduced by hiring and using volunteers (to include TLFPD

volunteers) at the Woodmoor Drive station.

Hansen said that eventually he hopes that both districts are paying 7.0 mills, since he is a taxpayer in

the Woodmoor/Monument district but TLFPD may have to raise its mill levy to 7.5 or 8.0 in the future. The fire authority and Woodmoor/

(Continued on page 6)

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Monument boards will work toward cutting the Woodmoor/Monument mill levy as much as the budget permits.

However, the effect of TABOR on a built-out district is difficult to predict. Tri-Lakes' assessed value will continue to grow as more developments are completed, including significant commercial revenue sources. This revenue growth may offset a possible shortfall in future revenue in W/M.

Hansen added that demonstrating their expected operational efficiencies to eligible electors of both districts will pave the way to a ballot issue finalizing the future consolidation into a single district.

Hildebrandt said that former W/M Treasurer Diggins had advocated cutting his district's mill

levy to 7.0 mills by relying on consumption of the cash reserves until costs could be reduced by changing to a mixed full-time/volunteer staff. However, that plan was not adopted because of the need to maintain a budgetary cushion as more equipment is purchased for the Roller Coaster station through bonds taken by TLFPD.

Hansen said his goal was consolidation in January 2006, but Sibell disagreed, saying that was too soon for a vote by constituents. Hildebrandt said there was still much to learn about costs and revenues as operations change. He added that he would not advocate consolidation unless he was sure there would be no deficit in either district so taxes could be eliminated as an issue.

My concern is Woodmoor/Monument's cash reserve is being handled by a Tri-Lakes administrative assistant. Will one of the districts change accounting firms since both districts use the same firm now? No, Hildebrandt said. There will be an "open process" for revenue and expenses, and different auditors will be assigned to each district from the accounting firm. In a year or two, the combined annual revenue will be about \$3 million, while combined expenses, he believed, will be about \$2.5 million.

How many stations will there be at build-out for both districts? Do developers have to donate land for them? Another station will be needed in Jackson Creek and perhaps another in the Forest Lakes subdivision, which is located near the end of Baptist Road on the west side of the railroad tracks. Developers are not required to donate land to a district but do make donations or pay cash-in-lieu to the town of Monument within the town's boundaries.

Why is TLFPD including properties in areas beyond the district's ability to respond in a timely manner? Tri-Lakes has agreed to provide fire protection east of Highway 83 where none existed previously since some protection is better than none, regardless of response times. TLFPD is also working on a future agreement with the Black Forest Fire and Rescue District, which is planning to build a new northern station that would be closer to these parcels than the Roller Coaster station. When that station is built, Tri-Lakes will look at de-inclusion of these distant eastern parcels. Tri-lakes can only suggest, however, that the owners of these properties should seek inclusion by Black Forest.

How many board meetings will there be in 2005? Initially, the fire authority may need more than one board meeting per month, but the two districts will only need to hold individual board meetings every two or three months.

The joint board meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m. The two districts' boards will continue to meet individually until the authority is in place in January. No joint meeting for December was announced. Previous joint meetings have been scheduled for the first week of the month.



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Woodmoor/Monument FPD Board, Nov. 23

By Jim Kendrick

The Woodmoor/Monument Fire Protection District (W/MFPD) Board met on Nov. 23. President Si Sibell was excused, having undergone quadruple bypass heart surgery on Nov. 22. Recording Secretary and Administrative Assistant Donna Arkowski did not attend the meeting, having resigned on Nov. 22. No reason was given for her resignation. Vice President Rod Wilson chaired the meeting.

At the end of the meeting, Bill Ingram was appointed to replace former secretary Bob Harvey, who resigned on Nov. 2. Ingram was also appointed treasurer for the board. Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District (TLFPD) Assistant Chief Ron Thompson also attended the meeting.

Resident has many questions

When the public was asked for comments, Ken Ford, the only W/MFPD constituent in attendance, noted the "pathetic turnout for a board meeting" with so many important issues being decided. He then asked a number of questions about the district's draft 2005 budget, which forecasts a reserve of \$649,331, down from the 2004 end-of-year balance of \$694,798, and about the fire authority (FA) intergovernmental agreement (IGA) that was signed by the Woodmoor/Monument and Tri-Lakes boards on Nov. 4.

Ford's questions are in *italics*.

Are there any limitations on the approximately \$600,000 in W/MFPD reserves for 2005? Treasurer Bob Hansen said he had spent considerable time with TLFPD Treasurer John Hildebrandt rearranging the Woodmoor budget's line items and figures to fit into Hildebrandt's Tri-Lakes budget spreadsheet. The final W/MFPD budget must be approved by Dec. 15. He added, "They will pay \$194 per year more than us."

Are there any limitations in the fire authority agreement on how W/MFPD equipment and capital can be used? Board member Jeremy Diggins said that Woodmoor funds are controlled only by the Woodmoor board. Hansen said that Woodmoor is not going to assume the Tri-Lakes debt.

Is there any specific wording that places restrictions on how W/MFPD equipment and capital can be used? Hansen said he'd have to research that.

Are there any restrictions in the fire authority agreement on deploying W/MFPD equipment assets outside the district to Jackson Creek? Hansen did not respond directly; he said there is no station there at this time.

Is there any wording in the fire authority agreement that prevents that from happening? Hansen said that all W/MFPD vehicles are in the Woodmoor Drive station. Thompson said that Tri-Lakes may move their

ladder truck to their Station 2 on Roller Coaster Road.

Then there is no wording in the fire authority agreement that prevents deployment of W/MFPD assets to another station in the Tri-Lakes district? Wilson said that Woodmoor trucks move to other stations temporarily during an automatic aid call. The North Group automatic aid agreement only applies to structure or wildland fires, which are a very small percentage, typically less than 5 percent.

Woodmoor/Monument engines are now covering all calls in Jackson Creek for Tri-Lakes? What else may be required of Woodmoor near Highway 83? Is there any wording in the fire authority agreement that prevents W/MFPD assets from being deployed to the Roller Coaster station or the future Jackson Creek station in Tri-Lakes? Diggins said that the fire authority chief, TLFPD Chief Rob Denboske, could deploy the force and its assets however he thought was best for the overall benefit of the taxpayers.

Is there any wording in the fire authority agreement on permanently moving a Woodmoor/Monument engine to a Tri-Lakes station? Thompson said that Tri-Lakes plans to put a high volume pumper, ambulance, and brush truck, but no tender,

at the Jackson Creek station. He said that W/M paid for the equipment in the Woodmoor Drive station and it should stay there.

Is there any wording in the fire authority agreement that prevents an engine that is purchased with Woodmoor/Monument funds from being permanently redeployed to a Tri-Lakes station? Hansen said that all assets will be inventoried and then turned over to the fire authority for its use. He said the board would keep ownership of the Woodmoor assets, like Tri-Lakes. Diggins added that for overall safety, the assets would be deployed where needed for the best overall good. The goal is a full merger with Tri-Lakes. Hansen said that the consolidated district would like to bring in Donald Wescott. He reviewed the wording of Article 6 of the agreement for Ford. Ford asked for a copy of the IGA. Hansen said he had up to 72 hours to provide a copy of the agreement. However, Diggins e-mailed an electronic copy of the IGA to Ford and OCN the day after the board meeting, as requested.

A review of the document reveals that there is no wording in the fire authority agreement that prevents the transfer of any assets, cash, or equipment, from Woodmoor/Monument to Tri-Lakes.

(Continued on page 8)

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Hansen said the district did not have to provide a copy of the draft budget for 2005 he had distributed. However, Diggins corrected him, noting that any document discussed by the board is a public record. Hansen provided Ford with a copy of the draft budget for 2005.

Have there been any executive session meetings since Oct. 26? None were posted. Hansen said there had been none.

When will the next joint board meeting be held? When will it be posted? Hansen said the joint meeting would be held on Dec. 8 or 9, and the boards would individually approve their budgets for 2005 at that same session. Diggins said the meeting would be posted three days prior.

Oct. 26 minutes contradict Hansen’s complaint about OCN

Before the board voted on accepting the minutes, Hansen asked to make a comment about a report in the Nov. 6 issue of *OCN* that implied “I was the bad guy and fired the chief.” He denied saying that former Chief David Youtsey could be terminated with no severance because he would not immediately sign a separation agreement. Hansen said, “I would want to hear the tape,” then said that the words reported in the article were not his intent.

Diggins suggested continuing a decision on the minutes until Hansen could listen to the tape, but Hansen declined. He added that Youtsey requested that the termination process be held in open rather than executive session, and that the board was not trying to embarrass or harm Youtsey in any way.

The minutes were approved unanimously (3-0) without revision; regarding the interaction between Hansen and Youtsey, the minutes read:

“Mr. Hansen read a letter addressed to Chief David Youtsey, which had been previously prepared by the board, and signed by Chairman Si Sibell, informing the chief that his job has been terminated as a result of the fire authority being formed with Tri-Lakes FPD. The termination was characterized as a layoff for operational efficiency and economic reasons, as the fire authority would perform all necessary services. Chief Youtsey was offered a choice of three different separation packages: 1. Resign and accept the separation package and agree to the separation and release agreement; 2. Accept a layoff for operation efficiency and economic reasons and accept the separation and release agreement; 3. Be terminated and receive only accrued vacation and sick time payouts and no separation pay or benefits. Mr. Hansen explained that the difference between options 1. and 2. is how Chief Youtsey wishes to have the resignation worded. Chief Youtsey responded that he was not prepared to sign any

documents or make any decision until he had first met with an attorney. Mr. Hansen advised that the board had contacted their attorney, who had prepared the letter and separation agreements. Mr. Hansen moved that in lieu of any designation of an option by Chief Youtsey that his termination as fire chief be effective as of this, with no separation pay or benefits; second by Mr. Wilson; motion carried with three in favor and Mr. Harvey voting against the motion.”

OCN stands by the report on this event.

Chief’s Report

- All bunker gear purchased with the FEMA grant has been received. The gear that has been replaced will be loaned to Tri-Lakes for use by its volunteers per the fire authority IGA. The inventory of the FA has been updated to include the new gear.
- Joint organizational meetings have been held between the firefighters of both districts.
- Policy and Procedure Manuals for both districts have been integrated by Garner and TLFPD Battalion Chief Bryan Jack for final approval by the FA board. Annual physicals have been scheduled.
- Live burn training was held for both districts on Nov. 5.
- Garner attended a seminar in Englewood on dealing with unacceptable employee behavior.
- Only the Woodmoor engines will be renumbered when FA operations begin.
- The ability of W/MFPD district personnel to proctor tests has been restored by the state as of Jan. 1, 2005. Certified Woodmoor proctor Ty Rinaldo lost a state Fire Instructor I test he was given to administer to a Woodmoor firefighter last summer. The loss halted all statewide testing for Fire Instructor I certification for months until a new test was validated. All W/MFPD certified proctors had their certifications suspended as a result of the missing test. Rinaldo’s proctor status could be restored on July 1 if he completes proctor re-training. Proctors receive incentive pay from the district.
- A debrief on the Bardsley Place structure fire (see photos on the front page) emphasizing safety issues will be held at a future date. Four firefighters were injured at this fire in King’s Deer on Nov. 13.
- A card and a plant were sent by the FA to Sibell.
- Garner praised the positive, constructive, and helpful interaction and cooperation he has had with TLFPD chiefs and both boards since taking over operations at the Woodmoor Drive station under Denboske.

The board unanimously approved the purchase of a multi-function copier/scanner for the station’s communications center, not to exceed \$300. Garner said the district’s large “\$1,000 copier costs more to repair than buying a new one.” Garner asked the board to authorize him to make discretionary purchases up to \$300 within the approved budget. However, there was no motion or vote to approve his request.

Ingram appointed

Wilson reported that Ingram had written a letter to him volunteering to fill Harvey’s vacated board position. Diggins noted Ingram’s previous involvement in district activities during the election and as a volunteer performing public relations and policy manual review activities. He was unanimously appointed a board member.

Following a half-hour executive session on personnel issues that began at 7:55 p.m., Ingram was unanimously appointed board secretary. The board also unanimously approved the 2005 employee pay scale and structure. There was no explanation of ei-

ther document, nor were copies provided to citizens attending the meeting.

Payroll issue

Hansen suggested that Tri-Lakes administrative assistants Paula Robbins and Linda Ousnamer perform payroll duties for Woodmoor/Monument for the rest of 2004, following Arkowski’s resignation. Thompson agreed that this was a workable interim solution.

Budget

Hansen said that under Youtsey’s proposed 2005 budget, revenues exceeded expenditures by \$193. He said there would be more discussion at the joint budget meeting in December, but he said he did not expect many changes from the draft he distributed earlier in the evening.

In response to Ford’s questions about the size of the district’s end-of-year reserve, he reviewed the history of the deceased Woodmoor/Monument firefighter whose retirement account of \$348,744 passed to the district because he had no heirs, producing a reserve of about \$708,000.

Hansen added that Tri-Lakes spends all their revenue every year, with no reserve to roll over to 2005. Ford responded, “Then shouldn’t the surplus be given back to the voters?” Hansen said no because Youtsey’s budget showed that the reserve would be gone by 2014, assuming no mill levy increases for those 10 years.

There was a lengthy dialog about the TABOR and Gallagher Amendment exemptions and district property assessments in the future, as well as service levels and the contrasting procedures for consolidation versus inclusion of the fire districts. Diggins reiterated the philosophy of demonstrating operational improvements through the IGA before asking taxpayers to vote for merger into a single entity, which is irreversible. If operations under the IGA are not going well, the agreement can be dissolved, he added.

Thompson explained the Tri-Lakes philosophy on lease-purchase of its new engines and ambulance to avoid incurring further debt. A grant of \$47,000 will also help pay for a fourth ambulance. He said that committees of firefighters will again be used in future decisions on deployments of FA assets in the four planned stations.

Thompson said an ambulance will also be placed in their future Jackson Creek station because they cannot work out a closest force response arrangement with Wescott.

In response to Ford’s question about Tri-Lakes serving distant areas in Black Forest that were recently included into the district, Thompson said there are no plans for Tri-Lakes to merge with Black Forest and they will rely on mutual aid only. If Black Forest builds a new northern station that is closer to these developments, Tri-Lakes will consider allowing the residents to request de-inclusion so they can switch to Black Forest.

Ford said that none of the board’s election promises of lower mill levies, consolidation, and retaining the Woodmoor station will be met in 2005. In response, Hansen said there are limits on what the board will approve and that if the fire authority tried to close the Woodmoor Drive station, he would vote for withdrawing from the IGA. Earlier, he had said that Woodmoor/Monument’s 9.92 mill levy could not be cut because planned revenues barely exceed 2005 expenditures, with only a \$193 surplus. In conclusion, Hansen said, “What you fail to comprehend is this board is not turning it over to” Tri-Lakes, and moved for adjournment.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m. The next board meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on Dec. 28.

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Donald Wescott FPD board, Nov. 10

By Jim Kendrick

On Nov. 10, the board of Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) reviewed and approved most aspects of its draft budget for 2005 and reviewed the seven bids received earlier in the day for expansion of Station 3 on Gleneagle Drive.

Treasurer's report

There has been an exceptional amount of additional special ownership tax revenue this year, about \$66,000 extra, with possibly \$11,000 more to come. This revenue comes from new vehicle taxes collected by the state that are then distributed to a number of agencies. Some of this revenue has been used to purchase additional equipment.

Chief Bill Sheldon proposed that the following purchases be made with the rest of the extra revenue: CPR mannequins (\$1,953), small medical items (\$1,400), training at Fire Leadership Challenge 2004 (\$3,400), replacement tires for two fire trucks (\$2,700), license fees for new channels to be added to the district's VHF and 800 MHz transmitter/repeater equipment (\$3,500), Red Alert computer program for management of required reports and certification updates (\$5,500), and a new server computer for this program (\$1,200).

Chief Sheldon also gave the board a list of large-ticket items he plans on purchasing in 2005. This list includes five sets of bunker gear (\$7,500); 600 feet of 3-inch hose (\$7,500); 500 feet of 1¾-inch hose (\$1,500); 800 Mhz upgrade to APCO 25 for 21 radios at \$400 each (\$8,400); and an air compressor (\$1,500).

It is unknown whether the \$8,400 will need to be included in the budget for 2005 or a later year. There may also be an additional cost for wiring the air compressor, which is to be installed in the new engine bay when it is built.

Board President Brian Ritz noted that the board always estimates the special ownership tax revenue conservatively and this year's additional revenue was welcome but can never be planned for. The board unanimously approved Sheldon's purchase requests.

Station 3 expansion update

The board has been considering what to include in the expansion for several months. The expansion will be on the north side of the station and will now extend east beyond the rear access to the engine bays, into the north end of the parking lot. In addition to adding a third engine bay plus new administrative offices, the board has considered options for creating a conference room, as well as new storage and mission support space. A new parking lot has been added as a bid option, to replace what's lost in the redesign.

The seven bids submitted include 12 optional costs for the conference room, replacement of one or more of the four current engine bay doors, replacement of one or more of three existing parking lot light poles, replacement of part of the concrete front driveway, construction of a 12-space parking lot, and replacement of exterior lighting.

The board must decide which of the options to build; the prices of the expansions and options vary widely in the bids, complicating the selection of the builder as well as the options. However, the board did indicate that at a minimum, the new engine bay, office spaces, workout area, and parking lot should be built.

The final cost figure that must be approved will also include the

costs of additional support equipment, such as a new air compressor to be mounted in the new bay, new office furniture, new beds, exercise equipment that will help qualify the district for health-and-wellness-related grants, and a server for a new computer network to interconnect each room in the expanded building. Also included are tighter figures for contingency fees and performance bonds and a new parking lot to avoid street parking on Jessie Drive.

One plumbing HVAC contractor pointed out that a gas line was missing from the bid proposal drawings. There will probably be a \$1,000-\$2,000 addition to these bids as a result. The board is now estimating that the construction costs will be about \$410,000.

Board member Kevin Gould, who is an architect, said he will continue to work with the architect hired to direct the bidding process. Sheldon will consult with the Better Business Bureau as well as county and other licensing agencies on past performance by the three lowest bidders. A decision will be made by mid-December on the successful bid.

Chief's report

Sheldon reported that the Colorado Springs Fire Department's 2025 plan does not call for construction of city stations to cover annexed areas south of Northgate Road for the next 8 to 10 years. In the interim, DWFPD will continue to provide fire and emergency medical service and provide mutual aid to CSFD Station 19. This arrangement has been in place for several months.

Sheldon and Ritz said that the Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District (TLFPD) is not negotiating with Wescott for medical support in the Tri-Lakes jurisdiction east of I-25 between Higby and Baptist Roads, and has not been for several months. Although Tri-Lakes Treasurer John Hildebrandt had stated this was the case at the Nov. 4 joint board meeting announcing the formation of the fire authority, TLFPD board member Keith Duncan told Ritz this was not so.

Wescott will continue to respond to fire calls in these adjacent communities according to mutual aid agreements. However, it will not respond to nearby medical calls unless specifically requested by the Tri-Lakes or Woodmoor/Monument Fire Protection District.

Sheldon said that the district's Christmas dinner is scheduled for the evening of Dec. 11 at the Cactus Rose restaurant.

Sheldon reported that the Franktown Fire Pro-

tection District had been unanimously approved to join the North Group at the group's meeting on Nov. 12. Tri-Lakes and Woodmoor/Monument did not attend that meeting. Sheldon said that with the recent addition of Franktown, this new membership would result in a significant realignment of the current agreement that specifies which equipment each participating district automatically sends to a fire within each district and what equipment they will move to an emptied North Group station in reserve.

The selection of equipment sent to the fire or to another station depends on what kind of fires are typical in a particular district and how many hydrants and/or cisterns and ponds are available, as well as what kind of training and expertise supporting districts can provide.

Assistant Chief Vinny Burns reported that there were 94 calls in October, bringing the totals for the first nine months of the year to 1,151, compared to 1,297 for the same period in 2003, a decrease of 11 percent. Within the district, there were 53 calls, including 42 medical, 4 traffic accident, 3 automatic alarm, 1 structure fire, 1 odor, 1 rescue, and 1 service call. Out-of-district mutual and automatic aid calls totaled 41, including 2 structure fire and 39 AMR ambulance calls.

Burns also pointed out that while there has been a decrease in the number of runs overall, there has been an increase in those inside the district.

The meeting went into executive session to discuss personnel matters from 9:10 to 10:25 p.m. The following action was taken: Employees—including firefighters, the administrative assistant, and the chief—will receive a 5 percent raise for the 2005 budget year.

The next meeting of the board will be held on Dec. 8 at 7 p.m. in Station 2 at 15000 Sunhills Drive. The final budget and certification of the mill levy for 2005 will take place at that meeting. Board meetings thereafter are normally held on the third Wednesday of the month.

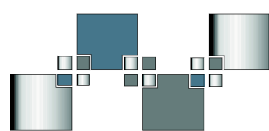


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North Group fire chiefs meeting, Nov. 10

By Jim Kendrick

The North Group chiefs unanimously approved the addition of the Franktown Fire Protection District,

increasing the number of firefighters and equipment available for regional automatic aid for structure and wildland fires in northwest El Paso County and southern Douglas County.

The additional fire trucks will result in a realignment of the matrix that lists what equipment will be dispatched to these types of fires and also what equipment will be moved to emptied stations for secondary calls. Franktown has at least two of its three advanced life support ambulances always on 24-hour call, with a paramedic in each, to provide mutual aid to neighboring North Group districts.

The Larkspur Fire Protection District announced the planned delivery in mid-December of a Pierce 3,500-gallon tender equipped with portable storage tanks. The Falcon Fire Protection District was also invited to participate in the meeting and in future North Group training events, in anticipation of also joining the group.

No representatives from the Tri-Lakes and Woodmoor/Monument Fire Protection Districts attended this meeting.

Franktown Deputy Chief David Woodrick said that his district would be adding two new 3,000-gallon tenders to Station 2 near Cherry Valley by Highway 83 and Greenland Road, in the south end of their district. The new tenders will be equipped with two 3,000-gallon portable water storage tanks to be used for water shuttles in areas without hydrants. Franktown will keep the existing 1,500-gallon tender at that station as well, along with the current pumper and brush truck.

Two new bays are being added to the existing three; they will be completed by the end of the year. Franktown is also planning to build a fourth station in the near future and has automatic aid agreements in place with Castle Rock and Parker Fire Protection Districts.

Woodrick also asked that each of the North Group districts provide a list of equipment that will be available as they prepare for an Insurance Service Organization (ISO) inspection. Availability of additional equipment is one factor that is used to determine the ISO rating for a district and the insurance rates paid by its constituents.

Donald Wescott Fire Protection District Chief Bill Sheldon said that the automatic aid matrix needed to be revised to reflect the added available equipment. Black Forest Fire and Rescue District Chief Dave Ury said the matrix "has always been a dynamic document, and should be revised every six months.

Ury also said he had been appointed to direct fire and hazardous materials planning for the Department of Homeland Security's operations in El Paso County. Part of his initial activities will include development and publication of the South Central Regional Fire/HAZMAT Instruction Manual.

Nationwide, regions are beginning to take over the development of planning documents and training exercises. Ury added that within two months, counties can begin to apply for federal grants to support these actions and asked the other chiefs for their support in organizing them.

Copies of new just-revised national Emergency Response Guides were passed out to each district. Copies of the lengthy Fire/HAZMAT Instruction Manual will be distributed via compact disc to each of the county's 23 fire agencies. Ury added that work to be done on fire and HAZMAT action plans includes:

- Modeling data resource programs

for use at the local level

- Adding 800 MHz radio capability in four neighboring counties (Chaffee, Lake, Park, and Teller) to match existing El Paso and Douglas County systems
- Discussing the new North Group radio manual
- Coordinating HAZMAT plans along the entire Front Range and then expanding them statewide
- Adding survivable satellite radio and cell phone connectivity between districts
- Developing and then training with equipment designed for use in mass casualty situations
- Specifying guidelines for operations and training for situations in big-box stores (to be added in 2005)

Ury added that a PowerPoint briefing on the new capabilities needs to be prepared and delivered to all participating agencies. He then noted that the Firewise program for homeowners in these five counties has suffered, as property owners have "not paid much attention due to more rainfall." Plans for implementation will also be discussed at North Group training officer meetings.

Sheldon announced the award of a \$45,000 Department of Homeland Security grant to the Palmer Divide Public Safety Group. This is the second Homeland Security grant awarded to Palmer Lake Police Chief Dale Smith on behalf of the group this year; the first was for \$71,000.

The grant includes \$22,000 for planning, \$21,000 for training (including overtime payments to participants), and \$2,000 for travel expenses for consultants. The scenario for the exercise is a terrorist incident at Lewis-Palmer High School. Two previous exercises organized by the group have shown the need for personnel in each kind of public agency to become familiar with the terminology and procedures of other agencies that would be required when confronting terrorist actions.

An organizational meeting for the exercises was subsequently held among participating emergency agencies on Nov. 18. Another meeting with District 38 leaders is scheduled for Dec. 22 at 8 a.m. at the "Big Red" district headquarters building, to further plan for a scenario that includes securing and evacuating the school following a terrorist bombing attempt.

Sheldon said that the cost of upgrading 800 MHz fire agency radios in use throughout the county is up to \$400 each. Total cost of the federal grant being sought to add federal bands of radio frequencies in addition to county and state frequencies is about \$7 million. Under the grant, the county's share of the cost for the upgrade from the APCO 16 to APCO 25 standard would be 20 percent.

Ury introduced the newly appointed Black Forest assistant chief, Brandon Payne. Black Forest Assistant Chief Franklin Blaha announced that his district would be offering several types of CPR training classes in the first quarter of 2005. The North Group's upgrade training for Firefighter I certification has just been completed.

The group's plans for Firefighter II certification, which was to be held at Woodmoor/Monument, have been dropped due to the resignation of their former assistant chief Jim Rackl. Plans for having him offer this North Group training at an alternate location will be discussed at a future meeting. Rackl serves as a volunteer firefighter for Wescott and is a member of the resource allocation task force for the Colorado Springs Fire Department and the fire science advisory board at Pikes Peak Community College. He continues to teach several firefighting certification classes at the college as well.

The meeting adjourned at 2:22 p.m. The next North Group meeting is scheduled for Dec. 8 at 12:30 p.m. at the Woodmen Valley Fire Protection District.

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Palmer Lake Town Council workshop, Nov. 4

By Tim Hibbs

Town Council Workshops are designed as a forum to discuss items to be considered at formal town council meetings. They are generally held on the first Thursday of every month.

Mayor Nikki McDonald called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Trustee Max Parker was absent.

Business licenses

Dianne and Jerome Schroeder outlined a request for a business license for Eye-Magination Arts. The company will produce custom computer graphics, game software, jewelry, and fine arts. After requesting comment from council members and the audience, and receiving none, McDonald added the license request to the consent calendar for the regular council meeting on Nov. 11.

Ordinances

Bob Miner, chairman of the Board of Adjustments, proposed a set of modifications to Ordinance 6-2004. The ordinance as written changes the composition of the board membership to include a member from the town council and the planning commission, and more explicitly defines the responsibilities of the board's operation. Key among Miner's suggested modifications was an assurance that the board's chairperson and vice-chairperson be citizen members.

The council discussed several scenarios under which citizens might not be able to occupy both leadership positions on the board. They agreed to rewrite the ordinance to ensure that the chairperson is a citizen member and that the vice-chairperson be the town council or planning commission member only if no citizen stepped forward to accept the position.

Miner stated that the current board members were in agreement with the ordinance as written and would likely not object to the suggested changes. All agreed that the quorum for board meetings be set at three members. Terms for the chairperson and vice-chairperson are one year.

Concertina or razor wire

The council briefly discussed Ordinance 7-2004, which defines restrictions on the use of razor or concertina wire on fences. Town attorney Larry Gaddis had suggested that the lowest height at which the wire could be placed was 8 feet above ground. Trustee Trish Flake clarified that the ordinance states the bottoms of concertina or razor wire can be no lower than 8 feet.

Water rates

Trustee Chuck Cornell said that at the last Water Committee meeting, members agreed to allow residential water rates to return to the year 2000 levels. No change was proposed for commercial users. The committee agreed to a figure of 69 million gallons of water production per year for planning purposes, which is the number of gallons used in the most severe drought encountered to date.

Cornell said that \$404,000 will be needed just to cover costs through 2005, and the plan provides for up to \$574,000 in revenues (which is highly dependent on actual usage for the period). Any surplus will be added to the Enterprise Fund reserves for contingencies and emergency repairs. The Enterprise Fund contains collections from water usage fees, as opposed to the Capital Improvement Fund, which retains collections from new tap fees.

He noted that the committee recognized the need for reserves and said that the current Enterprise Fund reserve amount is approximately \$130,000. He suggested a maximum cap on reserves in that fund of \$750,000, but doubted that the town would ever reach that figure. Cornell also complimented the members of the Water Committee for their professionalism and willingness to reach a compromise that was acceptable to all.

Council members discussed other variations in the residential rate structure that might account

for different water usage scenarios—particularly if 2005 turns out to be a year with higher than average precipitation. Cornell said that with the 2000 rate structure, punitive usage rates don't begin until individual usage exceeds 20,000 gallons per month. He said that in winter, 93 percent of town water users remain under the 20,000-gallon threshold.

He suggested that the council review the rate structure every six months to ensure that they stay consistent with usage and precipitation data, to which the council agreed. McDonald asked Town Clerk Della Gray to revise Ordinances 3-2004, 4-2004, and 8-2004 to reflect these suggestions and prepare them for formal vote at the town council meeting on Nov. 11.

RKJ Construction development plan review and road construction permit request

Randy Jones of RKJ Construction reviewed his progress with various entities involved in approving his Elephant Acres developments project. He produced three sets of revised plans that have been approved by Town Engineer Paul Gilbert.

The plans include the extension of Meadow Lane to Westward Lane as required by Gilbert and requested by Fire Chief Julie Lokken. Jones noted that the cul-de-sac has been designed with a 100-foot diameter and that all easements had been included as requested in previous council and planning commission meetings.

Flake stated that the town still needed a letter of credit as part of the application, but the amount on the letter would be dependent on whether or not the road was to be paved. If the road is asphalt, the shoulders would need to be 8 feet wider, which further increases the road's cost, according to Jones. He stated that the easements had been increased to 40 feet as Gilbert had requested, and that the storm water drainage plan would be posted at the property.

Flake read from a letter sent by Diana Humphreys of the Army Corps of Engineers to Jones. The letter raised a concern about the development's impact on water levels in aquifers, but McDonald noted that this is not an issue that the town of Palmer Lake would address. She said that Jones had the right to drill a well if he wanted to do so.

Several town residents had comments. Gary Atkins, who is also a member of the Palmer Lake Planning Commission, noted that the Road Commission recommended paving the extension of Meadow Lane. Tim Nolan stated that the connection between Meadow Lane and Westward Lane doesn't provide a second access route to the development since it connects to Meadow Lane on its south side.

However, Roads Supervisor Bob Radosevich stated that the extension mandates the connector road because of its length. He also said that the revised set of plans provided by Jones indicated asphalt as the road surface.

Other discussion items

Tom Day asked the council what steps needed to be taken to vacate Clio Avenue. He owns properties on both sides of the road. Trustee Gary Coleman said he would contact Parker to convene an emergency Roads Commission meeting to decide this issue.

No other business was presented to the board, so the meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.



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Palmer Lake Town Council, Nov. 11

By Tim Hibbs

After intense discussion in its Nov. 11 meeting, the Palmer Lake Town Council decided to keep residential water rates at current levels. The vote on Ordinance 3-2004 was tied, with Trustees George Reese, Max Parker, and Chuck Cornell voting in favor, and Trustees Brent Sumner and Gary Coleman and Mayor Nikki McDonald opposed. Trustee Trish Flake held the deciding vote and, after hesitating a few minutes, voted against the ordinances after deciding that the administrative costs to return to the year 2000 rate structure were too high.

The council also approved revisions to the Charter of the Board of Adjustments and approved developer Randy Jones’ application for a road construction permit to extend Meadow Lane.

McDonald called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. She welcomed the attendance of several Boy Scouts and Scout leaders from Troop 524.

Fire Department volunteer Maren Nieses received a certificate of appreciation from the town for her numerous volunteer and charitable activities.

A motion to approve all items on the consent calendar passed unanimously. Before asking for committee reports, McDonald noted that Parker and Coleman had switched committee responsibilities. Parker now heads the Roads Committee, and Coleman heads the Community and Economic Development-Buildings Committee.

Roads Committee

Parker said that Coleman and Roads Supervisor Bob Radosovich had talked with resident Tom Day about vacating the unimproved portion of Clio Avenue. The Roads Committee recommended in favor of the vacation, as there is little chance for additional development on that section of the road. Bob Miner, chairman of the Board of Adjustments, said the vacation requires approval from the council and then approval from the board. A motion to approve the vacation request carried unanimously.

Community and Economic Development-Buildings Committee Coleman reminded everyone of the annual chili supper Nov. 27. The evening will conclude with the lighting the Palmer Lake Christmas star.

He said it appears that the roof of the firehouse will need more extensive repairs than originally expected and that an estimate of the cost for repairs is being generated. He noted that the town hall building also requires some maintenance work, but most of that work is cosmetic only.

Parks and Recreation Committee Flake said that an application for Palmer Lake to be included in the Tree City USA program has been submitted. If accepted, it would mark the town’s 23rd year of participation.

She stated that she is interested in forming a citizen committee to assist with various parks and recreation activities. Anyone interested in

participating should contact Kathy at the town hall office.

Police Committee

Reese said there were 122 calls, 3 arrests, 20 cases, and 16 citations for the month of October. This compares with 117 calls, 6 arrests, 27 cases, and 14 citations in September.

Fire Committee

Sumner reported 1 fire, 9 medical, 1 wildland, and 4 mutual aid calls for October. For the year to date, the Fire Department handled 176 calls, of which 59 were for mutual aid. He said 75 children from Palmer Lake Elementary School kindergarten and preschool visited the firehouse during Fire Prevention Week.

Water Committee

Cornell noted that water usage for the month of October had dropped. He deferred discussion of residential water rates to the appropriate line item on the meeting agenda.

McDonald stated that William Hoffman from CTL Thompson, Inc. had looked at the geology and soil conditions of Palmer Lake. He determined the lake is leaking and proposed that the town fund a complete study, including recommendations for repair. He estimated that the study would cost between \$6,000 and \$7,000.

McDonald said that the lake restoration fund currently contains about \$10,000. She said the findings were good news, because it gave the town a place to start. Cornell added that the council could figure out how to fill the lake once the study is completed.

A motion to approve funding for a complete study by CTL Thompson, Inc. was approved unanimously.

Business license

Lupe Foster of 149 Shady Lane requested a business license for His Lights, a retail candle sales business. Coleman verified that a sales tax license had been secured. The council unanimously approved the request.

Intergovernmental agreements (IGA) ratified

Two IGAs between the town and Pikes Peak Regional Building were presented to the council for annual renewal. The basic agreement with Regional Building provides the town with construction and building inspections. The other IGA defines the services provided to Palmer Lake by the Regional Floodplain Administration, which is a part of Regional Building.

Kevin Stiltson explained how the Regional Floodplain IGA had been changed to include an automatic annual renewal feature and eliminate some out-of-date regulations. Automatic renewal under the revised wording in the new IGA occurs each calendar year unless the council takes steps to preclude renewal, terminating the agreement. Both agreements were unanimously approved.

Board of Adjustments ordinance approved

The council considered Ordinance 6-

2004, which defines a set of changes to the composition and responsibilities of the Board of Adjustments, known more commonly as the Variance Board. Modifications suggested by Miner at the Nov. 4 town council workshop were included in the ordinance.

Town Attorney Larry Gaddis stated that the ordinance as originally proposed would have given the Board of Adjustments too much power, so he scaled back its scope to include a more appropriate list of five responsibilities. The council unanimously approved the ordinance with the full set of Gaddis’s modifications.

Residential water rates remain unchanged

McDonald initiated discussion of Ordinance 3-2004, a proposal to return residential water rates to their year 2000 levels. She said she favored keeping the rates at their current levels, partly because of the town’s lack of experience with operating costs for the new well. The council recently removed water restrictions, placed in 2002 to minimize the effects of several years of drought, as the first step in the rate review process.

Cornell countered that the numbers supplied to the Water Committee did not support continuing the existing rate structure. He expressed concerns that revenues collected for water usage at the current level would exceed the amount necessary to cover costs and contingencies. “The water system is not there to be a cash cow for the town.” Cornell said the town covers its costs with the \$28 per month base rate.

McDonald said she was concerned that returning to pre-drought rates would encourage people to relax their watering habits. The town might have to later reverse their position, and in so doing hurt residents who made commitments based on the lower rates. Cornell noted that the council always has the option to change the rates as needed, to adapt to changing usage and precipitation patterns.

Gaddis recommended that if council members feel water usage will continue to grow, then they should continue to build the Water Enterprise Fund, to take advantage of any surface water rights that may come on the market. He also noted that if the ordinance is to go into effect sooner than 30 days from its adoption, the council is required by law to designate the change as an emergency measure.

Several members discussed the use of surface water as opposed to well water. Parker said that since the drilling of the new well was paid for with money from a bond issue, town residents should receive the benefit of water from that well. McDonald added that the cost for water extracted from the well decreases as more water is used. Cornell and Gaddis stated that well water should be viewed as a backup to surface water,

which should remain the primary water source for the town.

Coleman said the amount of water that’s in the reservoirs as of March 15 each year is earmarked for the town. He recommended keeping the rates as they are until that date, at which time the town will know how much of its needs can be satisfied with surface water.

Cornell moved to accept the ordinance as written, with an exception for pipe diameters larger than ¾ inch and water usage less than 20,000 gallons per month. Reese seconded the motion. Parker, Cornell, and Reese voted for the motion; McDonald, Coleman, Sumner, and Flake voted against, and the motion failed. Flake initially attempted to abstain, but Gaddis told her she had to vote according to town regulations, since she had no reason to recuse herself from the discussion or the vote.

Concertina and razor wire usage is restricted

The council next considered Ordinance 7-2004. The ordinance limits the use of concertina and razor wire to applications in which the bottom edge of the wire is no less than 8 feet above ground. Parker asked about the penalty for violating the ordinance; Gaddis replied that the penalty is up to a \$1,000 fine and one year in jail. The ordinance passed by unanimous vote.

RKJ Construction road permit approved

Developer Randy Jones once again appeared before the council to request approval of a road construction permit for an extension of Meadow Lane and a connector road between Meadow and Westward Lanes.

McDonald asked Jones if the Preble’s meadow jumping mouse study had been completed. Jones said he has yet to receive a letter promised him from Barbara Spagnola of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Gaddis said that the road project would be put on hold if approved by the council and a study finds that the mouse is present in the project area.

Flake asked when the council would receive Jones’ letter of credit for the project. Town Clerk Della Gray said that the letter follows receipt of the building permit for the road. Jones noted that the Regional Floodplain office and the Army Corps of Engineers is also required to sign off on the plan once it has been approved by the town council.

Parker asked about the Meadow Lane–Westward Lane connector road. Roads Supervisor Bob Radosovich stated that the connector is a required part of the project and will be paved with asphalt, but that the current plans didn’t reflect the paving. He suggested that the plans be revised to show that and added that Jones will need to conduct a geotechnical survey of the road base to determine the ultimate requirements for the surface.

Parker stated that the plans

showed a 125-foot diameter easement for the cul-de-sac but that the paved surface is only 100 feet in diameter. Fire Chief Julie Lokken said the extra room is to accommodate a water shuttle and complimented Jones for his assistance in getting that added to the plan.

Parker also said he received an unsigned letter from some town residents expressing their concerns and that Jones had addressed all their concerns except one involving the impact to underlying aquifers. Parker said that was not something Jones would be responsible for.

Flake asked about the procedure that needed to be followed for the permitting process. Parker said that once the council approved the permit request, the Corps of Engineers would issue its permit, and all remaining contingencies would need to be satisfied. These include the town council's receipt of the mouse study letter from Spagnola and Jones' letter of credit. Radosevich added that Jones would then need building permits for every house to be constructed in the development.

The council voted unanimously to approve the road construction permit be issued to Jones, subject to those conditions.

2005 budget discussion delayed
Discussion of the 2005 budget was on the agenda for the meeting, but Flake suggested that the discussion be delayed to give the trustees more time for review. McDonald agreed to hold a special town council session, open to the public, to discuss the budget, on Nov. 17 at 6 p.m.

No other business was presented for the council to consider, and McDonald adjourned the meeting at 9:17 p.m.



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Monument Board of Trustees, Nov. 15

By Jim Kendrick

On Nov. 15, the Monument Board of Trustees (BOT) reviewed the draft 2005 budget during a work session before the regular meeting. The board approved the annexation of the 45-acre Labib parcel on Old Denver Highway, as well as the Preliminary/Master/Zoning Plan, the final PD Site Plan, and Filing 1 Final Plat for the 32-acre Trails End subdivision on that parcel. The board also approved the Final Plat for the Aston Industrial Park, which will be built on the other 13 acres of the Labib parcel.

Special Meeting

The board continued reviewing the draft budget that had first been presented at a special meeting on Nov. 1. Nearly all of the items in the 21-page budget remained relatively unchanged from the 2004 amounts. Town Manager Rick Sonnenburg noted that the final general fund balance in the draft 2005 budget was \$300,287.

State law requires that the ending balance be at least 10 percent of the planned general fund expenditure, which was \$2,989,068. The current budgeted ending balance exceeds this minimum by \$1,381. Any added budget expense more than this \$1,381 “cushion” will require a cut from some other planned spending. The trustees had very little money for the additional projects and personnel that were requested in this budget work session by invited guests and staff.

The board recently asked Sonnenburg to have a consultant prepare a manpower study to analyze committee and department head requests for additional staffing in 2005. The consultant’s report on adding people to the town staff arrived on Nov. 12, too late to include in the material distributed to the trustees for review ahead of time. The report’s contents were discussed briefly at this meeting and in more detail at the subsequent Nov. 22 special meeting (see page 19 for that report).

Some estimated revenue and expenditure figures in the 2004 budget were adjusted based on previous work session discussions, BOT decisions and actions during the year, and updated data on new

commercial revenue sources. Sonnenburg grouped them into two categories for BOT discussion:

Revisions to the 2004 General Fund revenue and expenses

- Property tax revenue was reduced \$5,000 for rebate payment to Synthes
- Sales tax revenue was adjusted for a conservative estimate of Home Depot revenue
- Adjusted the master patrol officer salary
- Removed \$50,000 from Parks capital outlay for Limbach Park
- Added \$8,000 in Parks capital outlay for Limbach Park title, survey, and environmental work

Revisions to the 2004 Water Fund revenue and expenses

- Tap fee revenue reduced
- Board contingency fund adjusted to \$100,000

Changes to the 2005 budget

Some of the changes made to the 2005 budget included:

- Adjusted for Home Depot revenue
- Adjusted Mountain View Electric franchise fee
- Consolidated all grant awards from individual departments to administrative budget
- Consolidated compensated absences from individual departments to administrative budget
- Reduced compensated absences from \$40,000 to \$10,000
- Added \$93,800 for Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) grant to Parks revenue
- Added \$148,000 to Parks outlay to purchase railroad land for Limbach Park expansion
- Added \$40,000 to Planning capital outlay for Town Entry sign (Second and Highway 105)
- Changed police fuel from \$11,000 to \$12,100
- Added \$1,000 for judge services to Court budget
- Reserved \$20,000 for Town Entry sign in Community Development Fund

Sonnenburg also invited three groups to address the board: the Police Advisory Committee (PAC), the Historic Monument Merchants Association (HMMA), and the Parks and Landscape (P&L) Committee.

Police Advisory Committee

John Stearns of the PAC proposed that the board allocate about \$5,000 in 2005 for a further study by OZ Architecture to develop a conceptual design for a new Police Services Building. OZ produced the preliminary study on what should be included in a combined police station and town hall building as part of a downtown development study in July 2003.

Stearns said that the subcommittee on station design had discussed the standards contained in the Inter-

national Association of Police Chiefs construction guide with OZ, which would produce some renderings and a potential site plan. He added that the subcommittee could not move forward in planning until the BOT determined whether the police headquarters would be part of a large town hall as considered in the first OZ plan or be a stand-alone building with perhaps an attached courtroom and support facilities.

Stearns said a decision on one of the three options must be made soon if the town wanted to initiate a ballot issue in April to provide funding by a new mill levy or bond issue. He also asked for \$5,000 for an open house and notices required for the ballot issue.

Mayor Byron Glenn indicated it was too soon to make a decision on the size of the lot needed for each of the three options. Trustee George Brown said that only a stand-alone police building with no court facilities was fiscally possible for the foreseeable future. Stearns said the only site that seemed feasible for that police-only option at the present time would be in the Wahlborg addition. Town attorney Gary Shupp said advertising for the ballot issue process would need to begin in mid-February.

Sergeant Rick Tudor, who is the acting police chief (Chief Joe Kissell resigned on Nov. 5), said the court will outgrow the meeting room in Town Hall within two to three years. Brown said that adding upper stories to Town Hall would require a very expensive elevator and that there is insufficient parking available. Stearns agreed, adding that the courtroom would have to be on the first floor, making the option unworkable.

Trustee Tommie Plank said that “lots of other presentations need to be made before a decision.” There was general agreement that the earliest a ballot issue on financing could be ready would be next November.

Park enhancement

The HMMA made the same presentation endorsed last month by the P&L Committee. They requested a new matching appropriation of \$22,500 to beautify five settings in old downtown.

Folk Arts Gallery owner Lucy McGuire said the HMMA promises to match the town’s \$22,500 by delivering about \$65,000 worth of vegetation, building materials, and labor to finish the five separate projects that would make downtown “look like a town and feel like a town, presenting a pleasing appearance.” Pankratz Art Gallery owner and P&L Committee Vice Chair Linda Pankratz said the gardens would “make visitors happy” before they arrive to shop. She proposed that the funding come from the board’s 2005 discretionary fund.

Brown said they wouldn’t get all \$22,500 and needed to prioritize the list of projects, which includes:

- Limbach Park (\$4,000)
- Lavelett Park (\$4,000)
- Historic Monument Arch at Third Street by the post office (\$5,000)
- Well 8 building at Second and Beacon Lite (\$8,500)
- Town Hall (\$1,000)

McGuire said that a half-time parks supervisor would be needed to make sure that each of the five gardens received watering, weeding, mowing, and reseeding by the Public Works department. She suggested a part-time position to avoid the cost of benefits. She added that this employee could also write warning letters and citations to private landowners who are negligent about maintaining existing plantings or honoring weed ordinances.

McGuire noted that Public Works Supervisor Tom Wall wanted this employee to also take care of the town cemetery, making this a full-time position, with benefits, at a cost of about \$35,000 per year.

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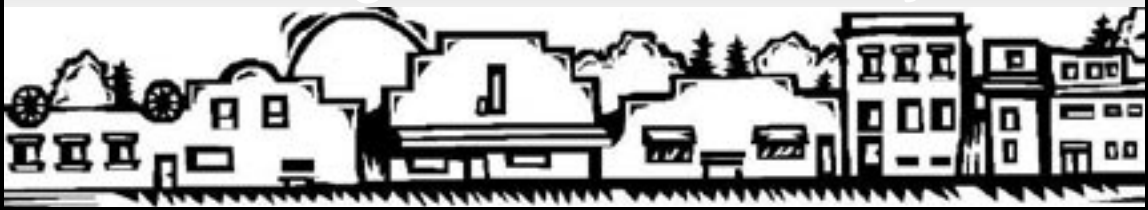
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Study says new hires not needed

There was a brief discussion of the need to hire another full-time employee, even though a just-completed manpower study asserts that neither Public Works nor the Planning Department needs any more people. In the past, there has been discussion of a need for up to three more employees in Public Works and perhaps more in Planning, as their workload has doubled due to numerous annexations and approvals of developments:

Town Planner

The study said that given the number of proposals under review this year (42, as opposed to a five-year average of 26 a year), Town Planner Mike Davenport was involved in too much day-to-day work because there wasn't a certified professional assistant planner on staff. Brown said there was no money for consultants—"We can't afford it"—and that Davenport needed to do more work on development applications rather than planning. Sonnenburg and Glenn noted that the manpower study pointed out the need to reorganize the Planning Department.

Assistant Town Planner

Currently the position involves primarily technical plan review, research, and clerical work and requires no degree. The study proposed that the assistant town planner position should be held by a professional planner with a master's degree or bachelor's with at least two years' experience and involve only planning and research. Other suggestions for these two positions were offered as well.

Planning Assistant

The planning assistant currently performs considerable technical review and research due to the high case loads for annexation, though the position is described as primarily clerical, requiring no degree, in the current job description. The study suggested that the planning assistant position should be restricted to clerical duties. Furthermore, the study suggested that the planning assistant could also take on additional clerical duties for Public Works. However, Public Works is located in a facility several blocks north of Town Hall, making it difficult to mix tasks.

The study also recommended the use of planning consultants to help with the peak loads currently placed upon the planning department. Another option suggested by the study is the elimination of minutes for all town meetings which

currently absorb several days per month by several staff members. The town would save tape recordings of meetings in case there is future litigation and the need for verbatim transcripts by a court reporter service.

Streets, Parks, and Cemeteries

These positions are currently staffed with three full-time technicians plus one full-time equivalent of seasonal hires during the summer. The street sweeping contract with Triview Metropolitan District requires 1,060 hours of overtime pay for 21 miles of road. Time needed for town road sweeping is 620 hours for 15 miles of road.

The Triview contract for \$47,000 exceeds the lease cost of the sweeper by about \$6,000 but does not pay for the entire cost of labor. The study recommended no increase in full-time employees but suggested more summer seasonal help be added.

No decisions were made regarding these additional staffing alternatives. The board decided to seek a study on how much it would cost to have a contractor perform the street sweeping.

Other grant funding also endorsed

Pankratz also pointed out that the Parks and Landscape Committee recommended that the town provide matches for two other Great Outdoors Colorado grants. The town's 40 percent match for a grant to provide Limbach Park restrooms and drinking fountains would be \$64,000, while the town's 30 percent match for playground equipment and park furniture would be \$12,000.

The budget work session was continued until Nov. 22 to start the regular meeting on time.

Regular Meeting

Kennel license sought: Mountain Farmer owner Norm Hellbusch asked for BOT assistance in resolving issues with his application for a business license for a kennel on his PD-zoned business property. During a lengthy discussion, several staff members and trustees repeat-

edly pointed out that since the property does not lie in the special downtown business district, he must apply for a specific rezoning to industrial use by the BOT before they can consider approval of a business license to put the proposed kennel in one of his existing greenhouses.

Davenport said he had told Hellbusch several times that he could not administratively approve the license application as he could if Mountain Farmer were located in the downtown district, so he gave Hellbusch an application for a zoning change. Hellbusch needs to provide preliminary and final site plans showing that his kennel complies with all pertinent regulations.

Shupp noted that situation was analogous to the Ready-Mix concrete batch plant dispute on the parcel at Highway 105 and Washington Street and that Davenport's advice to Hellbusch was correct.

(Continued on page 16)

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The board directed Davenport to type a letter listing all the steps the applicant must follow to get his kennel license approved and to provide copies of all the relevant town regulations. Hellbusch typically has between 10 and 20 German shepherds and Weimaraners in the kennel.

Regional Floodplain agreement revised

Kevin Stillson, director of the Regional Floodplain Office, discussed the revisions in the intergovernmental agreement between his office and local municipal governments that would allow for automatic annual renewal of the agreement unless the town specifically acted not to renew. Also, some outdated references were removed and replaced. The revised agreement was approved unanimously.

Santa Fe Trails annexation approved

The board unanimously approved the annexation, plans, plats, and first filing (18 lots) of developer Catalano Way after a 90-minute hearing featuring a lengthy discussion about drainage and lack of easements and access to portions of the parcel. There were no other significant controversies at this meeting, though a required easement agreement with a neighboring property owner had not been signed.

In past meetings, both the BOT and Planning Commission told developer Kim Catalano that the density of homes was too high in his first two proposals, but the third proposal resolved the issue. The number of lots was reduced initially from 130 to 106, then to 86. The amount of open space now preserved is about twice that required by town regulations for a 45-acre development, though much of it is wetlands and mouse habitat.

The commercial lots initially proposed along the entrance road have been eliminated and re-

placed by residential lots. Average home prices have almost doubled as the smallest lot sizes have also almost doubled.

There is a secondary access for emergency vehicles from Santa Fe Trails, which will also be the only trail connection to the north. There will be no trail within the open space between the railroad tracks and adjacent houses in the subdivisions along Old Denver Highway.

Richmond American Homes of Colorado, Inc., the sole builder, will take over operations of the homeowners association that maintains all interior parks and common landscaping.

The development is surrounded on three sides by the town. The housing portion of the development lies between the Villages at Monument and the railroad tracks just south of the Santa Fe Trails development. A narrow strip next to the new town Well 9 provides access to Old Denver Highway.

Town Engineer Tony Hurst answered a number of questions about drainage on both sides of the railroad tracks, which has been controversial for several years. Adjacent rural landowner Mike Watt has had repeated problems with severe sediment accumulation where his driveway, next to Soc-N-Roll, goes under a railroad trestle bridge.

Watt told the BOT and the Planning Commission earlier this year that sand is carried from the Santa Fe and re-named Pastimes subdivisions (formerly called Peak View Ridge or John Laing Homes) just north of Trails End along the east side of the tracks and down to the low spot just under the bridge, blocking access to his home.

Over the past few years, there has been dangerous erosion under the eastern siding tracks leaving

numerous railroad ties without support. Since then, the railroad has performed extensive roadbed repairs and improvements. However the railroad has never provided drainage culverts to allow flows under the tracks, to restore the historic flows that were blocked in the 1870s. This forces all the storm runoff water, often filled with sediment, to flow along the east side of the tracks to Watt's driveway under the trestle bridge.

However, Watt wrote a letter to the BOT saying he would be satisfied with Catalano's drainage plans for delivering water from his development to Teachout Creek as long as the town accepts responsibility for future monitoring to ensure that there is no further sedimentation from the water draining from Trails End. The actual easement paperwork had not been completed by the hearing and was made a condition of final approval.

During public comments, adjacent resident Laura Vertucci said she was concerned about, rather than opposed to, the development. She asked for specifics on the distance between her Santa Fe Trails house and the adjacent Trails End house that would be built behind her. A 30-foot sewer easement runs along the boundary between the two subdivisions that precludes construction of a screening fence. With the easement and the setbacks for each house, it was determined that the houses would be no less than 105 feet apart.

Trees would be planted in the backyards of houses adjacent to Santa Fe Trails homes for screening. Glenn asked what would prevent the Trails End homeowners from digging them up to have more room in their backyards. Davenport said regulations require town approval before a tree is removed. Brown noted that Catalano was providing more installed landscaping and long-term maintenance for it than any other developer along Old Denver Highway.

Trustee Gail Drumm expressed concern about side yard setbacks, future railroad noise complaints, drainage, and paving on the Old Denver Highway frontage.

Davenport noted that the recent increase in the minimum side setback from 5 feet to 7½ feet occurred after the Trails End application and didn't apply. Catalano said that Richmond will include full disclosure notices on the plats and in the paperwork given to every purchaser.

Davenport said that Town Engineer Tony Hurst had determined that the Santa Fe Trails detention pond next to Trails End and the railroad tracks was adequate, but the pond for Pastimes/Peak View Ridge is not. The tracks are a barrier to east-west natural drainage, and the railroad is responsible for water that drains along its right-of-way, carrying sediment to Watt's driveway.

Wall noted that a traffic impact fee of \$700 per home would far exceed the approximately \$24,000 needed to repave the 416 feet of Old Denver Highway frontage for Trails End. Acceleration and deceleration lanes will also be added to prevent the road's level of service from worsening below its current "B" rating.

Plank expressed concern that the traffic study might be out of date and asked for clarification of water rights. Davenport said that Wall's review of the water situation shows that the parcel has rights for 58 acre-feet of water per year, a surplus of 9 acre-feet over the subdivision's requirement; that surplus will be donated to the town.

Business/batch plant ordinances approved

Shupp reported that he had drafted two revised ordinances. The new ordinances are a result of the town's ongoing lawsuits regarding concrete batch plants.

Title 5, Business Licenses and Regulations, had been determined to be unconstitutional by a state court. The board unanimously approved an ordinance "repealing, re-enacting, rewriting, and replacing Title 5 of the Municipal Code."

A second ordinance was also unanimously

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approved: “An ordinance amending existing provisions of the Town Code and adding new provisions relative to considering uses in the heavy industrial zone district and establishing standards for such uses.” The amendments apply to Chapter 17.40 of the Municipal Code and related cross-references elsewhere in the code. Shupp said the new wording clarifies the mechanics of the review and approval process for batch plants.

Update review continued

The board again continued a discussion of the Comprehensive Update to the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances and also a discussion of the review requirements for development applications until the Dec. 18 BOT meeting. The BOT will have the final budget hearing on Dec. 4, which will likely fill the agenda for that meeting.

Payments approved

A payment of \$116,721.58 to XKE Contractors, Inc., was unanimously approved for paving work along Old Denver Highway associated with the just-completed installation of the water main from Well 9 to the Well 8 water treatment facility at Second Street and Beacon Lite. Some crack-sealing work remains to be done on the nearly completed contract.

A payment of \$12,429.39 to GMS, Inc. for monthly engineering consultant services was also unanimously approved, as was a transfer payment of tax revenue of \$17,140.49 to Triview Metropolitan District.

Proposed Limbach Park sale agreement

Shupp summarized the sales proposal from Union Pacific for three parcels surrounding Limbach Park. Among other points, the railroad will retain all mineral rights and will require a chain-link fence to be built. The proposed terms were accepted unanimously, although the board members were not happy about the “surprise” fence requirement or its \$11,000 unplanned cost or having to accept responsibility for any unknown environmental problems with the parcels.

Compensated Absence Liability

Town Auditor Kyle Logan of Swanhorst & Cutler recommended in the 2003 audit that the town review its policy allowing employees to accumulate up to 720 hours of sick leave and to cash out half the unused hours at retirement, resignation, or termination. Sick leave is accrued at 8 hours per month, which requires no less than 7.5 years to max out, assuming no leave is taken during that interval. Sonnenburg's analysis of the issue noted that the town's policy is not remarkably different from most Colorado towns of similar circumstance.

Sonnenburg offered various accrual and cash-out options and suggested that board members may wish to come up with other maximum numbers and ratios for cashing out. He also recommended that the board consider adding short-term disability coverage if the employees will no longer have 90 sick days to cover the interval before the existing long-term disability benefits would begin. Sonnenburg offered to do research and analysis on different schemes involving “grandfathering” current employees.

Glenn suggested that sick leave could expire at the end of each year. Brown said that allowing accrual is an incentive compared to use-or-lose policies that lead to absences without actual illness to avoid losing the accrued hours. Wall agreed that limiting or eliminating accrual would likely ensure two weeks of absences by many employees. Orten suggested further study on costs for short-term and long-term disability in-

insurance coverage.

Other matters

Drumm and Trustee Scott Meszaros were appointed to the search committee for replacing former Police Chief Joe Kissell. Other committee members will include one member of the Police Advisory Committee, one police sergeant, Kissell, and Sonnenburg.

The board unanimously agreed that if they receive a tree-planting grant from the Colorado Tree Coalition, it should be used for adding trees in the expanded Limbach Park. The grant would require a 50 percent match from town revenues.

Police Report

Acting Chief/Sergeant Rick Tudor reported that there was one notable crime on Oct. 9 where two young adult males tried to burglarize two residences and a business near Second and Front Streets. No actual thefts appear to have resulted. In October, there were 66 cases, 87 total citations, 69 warning notices, 17 arrests (one under age 18), and 16 total crimes.

Development builder Colorado Structures has offered to donate one of its construction site office trailers for temporary office space. The portable modular building previously offered to the department by District 38 was found to be unworkable.

The department was awarded a LEAF grant for \$9,000 for 2005; there is no matching fund requirement.

Staff Reports

Glenn reported that the Baptist Road interchange upgrade would cost about \$14 million. Glenn asked if he could act for the board in settling issues and differences between supervisors and the staff. The nature and extent of the problems was not discussed. Orten offered to help Glenn mediate “before it gets too bad.”

Shupp said there had been an unprecedented referral of the Rockwell concrete batch plant lawsuit to another more senior judge after oral arguments had been presented.

The town received a plaque from its municipal insurer CIRSA for low injury rates.

Drumm asked Wall if he wanted to keep the second street sweeper after the lease expires; Wall said only if he receives another employee

to operate it. He added that overtime costs for twice-monthly sweeping in Triview is about \$27 per hour.

Wall reported that construction of the raw water line from Well 9 up Old Denver Highway to the new treatment facility at Well 8, Second Street and Beacon Lite Road, is conditionally complete.

(Continued on page 18)

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The relocation of the Well 1 Treatment and Controls Building on North Jefferson Street is very near completion. Production levels are down significantly due to cold weather limiting irrigation.

Town banner maintenance on Second Street continues to be a problem due to wind, high profile vehicles hitting them, and mischief; a budget for this maintenance is needed.

Asphalt maintenance is completed for the year, though any cracks discovered in December may still have to be repaired.

Public Works awarded a contract to complete construction of the bike lane on the west side of Mitchell Avenue all the way to Mt. Herman Road.

The meeting went into executive session at 9:45 p.m. for negotiations, legal advice, and personnel issues. The next regular BOT meeting will be held on Dec. 6 at Town Hall, 166 Second St. If required, a special meeting to conclude preliminary budget reviews may be scheduled at 5:30 p.m. BOT meetings are normally held on the first and third Mondays of the month.

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Monument Board of Trustees special meeting, Nov. 22

By Jim Kendrick

The Monument Board of Trustees (BOT) confirmed at its special meeting of Nov. 22 that Town Planner and Assistant Town Manager Mike Davenport had resigned on Nov. 19. No reasons were given for the abrupt resignation.

The board continued discussing the draft 2005 budget at a work session during the meeting. The board also discussed negotiations regarding drainage onto the Watt property and personnel issues during an executive session following the budget discussions. Public Works Supervisor Tom Wall was absent due to illness.

Town Manager Rick Sonnenburg provided some possible budget revisions for consideration based on discussions at the budget work session on Nov. 15.

Additional suggested expenditures of \$74,300 included:

- One additional full-time streets/parks/cemetery technician—\$40,000
- Insurance premiums for short-term disability—\$3,900
- Buy-down of employees' sick leave accrual—\$12,500
- Chain-link fence for new Limbach Park property line required by Union Pacific—\$11,000
- Normal salary for replacement Police Clerk—\$4,700
- Police electric utility increase for new trailer—\$2,000
- Police drug testing increase—\$200

Offsetting cuts of \$72,919 will be added to the current planned budget surplus of \$1,381; these include:

- Planning graphics software and briefing projector—\$5,000
 - Paving reductions (from \$204,000 to \$136,081)
- Mayor Byron Glenn suggested adding a part-time clerical worker (25 hours per week, no benefits) to provide assistance in Public Works and Planning, as well as providing lunchtime coverage of the reception desk, at a cost of between \$16,000 and \$17,000 per year. There was general, though not final, agreement to add this position.
- To pay for this additional expense and others, the board decided to eliminate the proposed cut in the water franchise fee from 12 percent to 3 percent, which would have resulted in a loss of about \$105,000 in revenue. There were no representatives from the Planning Department or Public Works present to participate in discussion of these options.
- No decision was made about reducing the maximum sick time accrual from 720 hours to a new lower cap of 360 hours. Nor was a decision made about the addition of a new employee benefit that would provide the short-term disability payments (town cost—\$3,900) offsetting the lost hour benefit. The board asked Treasurer Judy Skrzypek to survey the staff on their preferences of possible sick leave benefit changes.
- New General Accounting Standards Board (GASB) 34 procedures require that the town set aside a reserve fund specifically to pay for any sick leave buyouts, which will reduce the amount available for the
- (Cont. on page 20)

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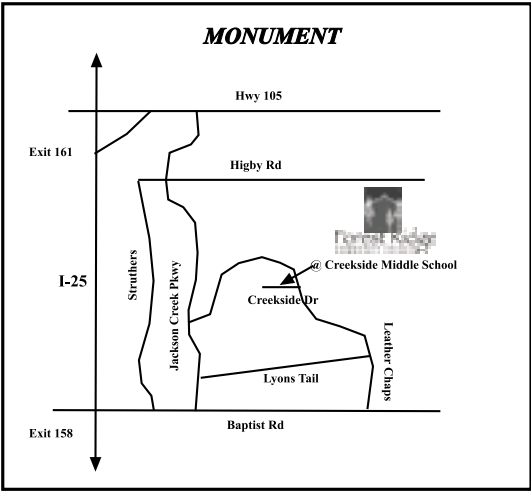
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general fund reserve and will affect future budget flexibility. This state-required reserve fund must contain no less than 10 percent of general fund expenditures.

Staff supervisors again noted the likelihood that employees will find a reason to use sick leave rather than lose it. The normal cost of a buyout of accrued sick leave (when a staff member resigns without having already accrued 720 sick leave hours) runs around \$8,000 to \$10,000.

Davenport's resignation will cost the town \$10,000 in sick-leave buyout that was unplanned—and this was cited as an example of why the costs must now be included in future budgets. This unexpected expense leaves only about \$2,000 in the board's 2004 discretionary fund. Skrzypek said the maximum amount of a typical buyout where 720 hours had been accrued would be about \$12,500 plus the pro-rated cost of benefits such as FICA and medical (\$1,000).

Glenn repeatedly expressed his desire to drop the purchase of three additional in-car police video cameras (\$12,000) to fully equip the marked car fleet from the 2005 budget. However, Sergeant Rick Tudor, who is the acting police chief, and Town Attorney Gary Shupp said the cameras will more than pay for themselves by disproving false claims of harassment and brutality that might arise from arrests. Tapes from the three cars that already have these cameras are normally held for 90 days, then recycled if not used as evidence in a suit.

Glenn said the evidence locker is a known weak area in the current undersized police department's

modular building. He did not suggest a fix for the problem or additional funding for it. There was general agreement to keep the three in-car cameras in the budget but to drop the six new Tasers for now. Should Monument Marketplace revenues exceed expectations, the Taser purchase will be re-evaluated toward the end of 2005.

After a lengthy discussion about why the department's vehicle maintenance costs appear to be surprisingly high to new board members, the BOT endorsed the budget proposal to order a new police car in the next two months. Police cars spend a high amount of time idling and in stop-and-go driving, which roughly doubles the wear and tear on the running gear. The new car will be part of the large state police fleet purchase, which saves the town a considerable amount. However, no remittance will be required until 2005, even if the car is ordered immediately.

Tudor gave a lengthy explanation on why the decision to purchase a car could not be delayed until later in 2005, like the Taser purchase decision. Police cars are manufactured only in a single run after normal model year production closes out. If the town's order is not placed by early January at the latest, the department will not be able to get its preferred model. Delaying the order further would mean the only way a car could be obtained from the 2005 run would be if another department cancelled its order, thus requiring acceptance of a car built to another department's specifications.

Trustee Gail Drumm said he would like the board to consider keeping the older second street

sweeper on hand. Sonnenburg said that a spare sweeper isn't needed because all maintenance and repairs to the newer sweeper can be performed in between the twice monthly sweeping in Triview and less frequent sweeping in the town.


No decisions were announced regarding proposed changes in the job descriptions for the three planning department positions. A manpower study had suggested that the assistant planner's job description be upgraded to require a planning degree (master's or bachelor's with professional planning experience) and that the expected increased planning review workload be given to consultants until the workload warrants hiring another planning assistant.

No decision was made regarding Wall's suggestion that the half-time parks supervisor (a position proposed by the Historic Monument Merchants Association and Parks and Landscaping Committee on Nov. 15) perform cemetery maintenance as well and that another full-time person perform the approximately 1,700 hours of street sweeping required annually.

No decision was made regarding a separate suggestion to combine the half-time position of this proposed parks supervisor with a separately proposed part-time street sweeper operator position into one full-time position.


The board went into executive session at about 7:30 p.m. to discuss personnel issues. Glenn said the board should discuss the Watt sedimentation issue in executive session as well. No announcements were made after the executive session.

The final 2005 budget hearing is scheduled for the regular board meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Dec. 4 at Town Hall, 166 Second St. Normally, BOT meetings are held on the first and third Mondays of the month.



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Monument Parks and Landscape, Nov. 9

By Sue Wielgopolan

Members of the Parks and Landscape Committee expressed frustration and disappointment at the Nov. 9 meeting over the news that the much-anticipated new historic Monument sign and landscaped entrance would not be completed until at least March 2005.

The sign and landscaping, to be located at the intersection of Second Street and Highway 105, were initially supposed to be finished by Thanksgiving. Town Planner Mike Davenport, who seemed dismayed at the delay, explained the complications that necessitated moving the completion date forward.

At a June meeting between Davenport and Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) officials, Davenport was led to believe that the town had received verbal approval for the plans. However, in early October he received a request from CDOT for additional information from the town before it would grant an access permit. The town must obtain this permit before contractors can landscape or build on right-of-way property controlled by CDOT, which includes the portion of

the site on the south side of Second Street.

Due to the likelihood of weather delays and the compressed time frame presented by the Thanksgiving deadline, the three bidding contractors included significant overtime labor charges in their proposals, which were submitted in late September. Those costs pushed bid averages two to three times higher than the \$32,000 allotted for the project. Committee members were forced to regroup and consider other alternatives.

Committee member Monika Marky said she wants a temporary sign erected until spring. However, Davenport pointed out that there was no money in the budget for one and that it would take several months to develop and approve a design. He felt a more plausible option was to use a banner and agreed to ask CDOT to install the two flagpoles they had promised the town while they are constructing sidewalks at the site. Committee members will research banner cost and sizes when they receive pole specifications from CDOT.

Davenport received the committee's approval to ask the Monument Board of Trustees (BOT) for a total of \$60,000 for the sign and surrounding

landscaping, of which \$32,000 will be carried over from 2004. If the trustees approve the additional expenditure for fiscal year 2005, the project will be rebid in the spring. Davenport hopes that with the additional allocation and expanded work schedule, there will be sufficient cash in the budget to complete the sign and landscaping on both sides.

Monument Marketplace

In considering the landscaping plan for the yet unnamed 200,000-square-foot retail store in the Monument Marketplace, members critiqued the appearance and composition of similar existing landscaping around Home Depot. Approved landscape design standards at the Marketplace already exceed town standards in amount and quality of materials; developers meeting these requirements are not obligated to follow additional Landscape Committee recommendations.

Davenport still encouraged input, reiterating that part of the committee's purpose is to evaluate ongoing projects and to anticipate and avoid problems by making recommendations based on their

(Continued on page 22)

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experience. Member Bob Watson questioned whether the heat generated by the size and quantity of rock might result in increased water requirements and/or the loss of smaller shrubs to desiccation or “burning” in a more typical (warmer and dryer) summer than last year.

Members discussed the merits of reducing rock and increasing mulch and other materials. Ultimately the committee chose to preserve a sense of continuity and harmony between existing and new construction by accepting the landscaping plan without comment.

At the Oct. 14 meeting, committee members had considered asking the applicant to add landscaping to the front façade similar in type and quantity to that used in the parking

lot. Since none had been required in front of Home Depot, Watson felt it would be unfair to place such restrictions on the new structure. The rest of the committee concurred, dropping a request to add landscaping to the front of the building.

Members subsequently voted unanimously to recommend approval of the landscape plan with the addition of two notes. The applicant must add the landscape certification note to the plan, which verifies that money placed in escrow will be used to install and maintain the landscaping as shown on the plan. The second note will specify that approval is contingent upon compliance with all U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service requirements for the Preble’s meadow jumping mouse.

In a brief side discussion, the committee asked the status of the planned plaza and clock tower in the Monument Marketplace. Davenport replied that, to his knowledge, no time schedule had been established for construction of the plaza area. The approved plans for the Marketplace include a colored concrete plaza and tiered and landscaped sitting area surrounding a clock tower with timber and stone accents.

The developer, CLC Associates, agreed to construct these when the Marketplace reaches 50 percent of build-out. That should happen relatively soon. Davenport estimated that the new big-box store will bring build-out to just short of that milestone. The new building, currently under construction north of Home Depot, is rumored to house a future coffee shop, telephone store, and mortgage company and should push build-out capacity past 50 percent.

Trails End development

At the October meeting, the committee had postponed discussion of the landscaping plan in order to research fencing types and landscape substrates, and what, if any, restrictions they should recommend. Lot sizes in the preliminary plans for the subdivision were smaller than the current 7,000-square-foot average, prompting concerns that without restrictions on types and height of fencing, the area could appear small and claustrophobic.

With the increase in lot size, committee members declined to mandate or prohibit any particular fence type or height. When questioned about barrier fencing, Davenport briefly described the type of flexible plastic fencing that will be used to protect mouse habitat from disturbance, but added that the developer had no plans to place a fence near the railroad tracks.

Members also wanted to assess whether rock or wood mulch would strike the best balance between practicality and visual appeal. Watson stated the greatest drawback to using wood chip or bark mulch is its susceptibility to blowing, but if laid according to the manufacturer’s recommended depth on bare ground as opposed to plastic sheeting, it will stick, not slide, and form a reasonably stable surface. The committee approved the developer’s intent to use wood mulch rather than rock for landscaping.

After appropriate motions, the committee unanimously recommended approval of the landscaping plan with three notes added. The first note will specify that any trees removed must be replaced two for one based on caliper size, as required by the Monument landscape guidelines. The second note calls for inclusion of the landscape certification statement on the first plan sheet. The third note will actually be a revision of the lighting note, stating that the developer will alter shielding as necessary to protect

adjoining residences and driver visibility from excessive light or glare.

Railroad land purchase

On Nov. 1, the BOT approved the purchase from Union Pacific of railroad land to expand Limbach Park. The park will now extend the full two blocks between Second Street and Lincoln on the east side of the tracks, and 1½ blocks south from Second on the west side of the tracks. The acquisition was necessary to continue with planned improvements, including restrooms, an expanded play area, and landscaping.

Approximately two-thirds of the \$150,000 price will be covered by Greater Outdoors Colorado funds; the town will fund the remainder. The required environmental assessment will take about two to three weeks. If no additional complications arise, Monument expects to purchase the property 45 days after the assessment and to close in early 2005.

Colorado Tree Coalition grant

If a grant submitted by Assistant Planner Natalie Ebaugh to the Colorado Tree Coalition is approved, the town of Monument will receive free trees for its downtown beautification project. The last time a grant proposal was approved was in 2001. Ebaugh worked to ensure success for this year’s request, which could contribute up to \$3,000 toward climate-appropriate shade trees for the downtown area.

Davenport asked for the committee’s preferences on tree size and planting locations for the grant application, which must be completed before Dec. 10. After a short discussion, members selected Limbach Park as the highest priority for receiving shade trees and decided larger (4-inch) caliper trees would have more visual impact than a greater quantity of saplings.

Historic Monument Merchant’s Association (HMMA) project

A representative of the HMMA plans to present a proposal for the beautification of five locations in Monument at the BOT budget workshop on Nov. 15. Those locations include: Well 8 building at Second and Beacon Lite; the Historic Monument Arch on Third Street; Limbach Park; Lavelett Park; and Town Hall.

The association is requesting a grant from the town of \$22,500 for the project, spearheaded by Woody Woodworth of High Country Store. Cost savings to the town would be substantial. Woodworth intends to supply at-cost plants and labor if other merchants will provide matching funds. A significant portion of the labor will be provided by volunteers. If approved, work will commence this spring.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m. The December meeting date has been moved forward one week to Dec. 7, at 6:30 p.m. in Town Hall, 166 Second St. Meetings are normally held on the second Tuesday of the month.

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Monument Sanitation District board, Nov. 16

By Jim Kendrick

On Nov. 16, the Monument Sanitation District (MSD) Board approved the renewal of the wastewater treatment plant management agreement and the revised Joint Use Committee (JUC) budget for the plant. They also reviewed district influent copper results for the plant provided by a consultant testing laboratory and plans for extending sewer lines to Wakonda Hills. Board member Jeremy Diggins was excused from the meeting.

Treasurer's report

The board approved a payment for \$6,716 to ACZ Labs for analysis of water samples of the district's influent water that was delivered to the Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF). ACZ tested for potentially dissolved and total copper content. The board also approved a payment of \$2,449 to the JUC for architect fees for the new administrative building at the WWTF.

Joint Use Committee

The JUC acts as the board for the WWTF, which is owned by MSD, Palmer Lake Sanitation District (PLSD), and Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD), each of whom have at least two representatives on the committee. Administration and payroll for the treatment facility is performed under a JUC management agreement with WWSD. The board unanimously approved a renewal of the management agreement, as well as the \$1,286,689 JUC budget for 2005. The JUC budget includes approximately \$329,000 for a new administrative building.

On two occasions within 2004, the plant's treated effluent water that is discharged into Monument Creek temporarily exceeded current Environmental Protection Agency and state standards for copper content. However in most samples, the amount of copper in discharged water is barely above the lowest measurable amounts using current technology.

These copper standards were drastically lowered recently. Some recent scientific studies show that plant and aquatic life in streams may be damaged by even extremely low copper concentrations. However, human copper tolerance is roughly 100 times higher than the new standards.

On the other hand, the district's permit attorney has negotiated for a temporary, slightly looser standard during the period when the WWTF will be modified. During the compliance period for the plant's license renewal, new procedures and equipment will be tested.

Balancing the complex organic chemical reactions within the WWTF is an art that requires experience with a particular facility. WWTF manager Bill Burks and his assistant Scott Eilert have had great success in optimizing the plant's filtering capacity, according to MSD Manager Mike Wicklund. The compliance period will run through the end of 2007.

Dissolution petition difficulties continue

The controversy over the wording on a petition that might lead to MSD's dissolution has been renewed. The wording in the Full Text of Proposed Measure section of the petition differs from the wording in the Summary of Proposed Measure section because they are written by different people in accordance with different sections of the Colorado Revised Statutes.

Ernie Biggs and John Dominowski have written the Full Text of Proposed Measure section. The Monument Sanitation District has written the Summary of Proposed Measure section.

Wicklund noted that Ernie Biggs had sent a letter to MSD on Nov. 12. The letter acknowledges that Biggs received MSD Secretary Glenda Smith's approval of the wording of his cover letter for the blank petition forms that constituents would be signing if they wanted to dissolve the district.

Biggs then claimed that Smith's approval was subsequently contradicted by a letter sent to him by MSD's attorney Larry Gaddis. Biggs wrote that Gaddis said the wording on the petition was not acceptable. Biggs asked for "clarification as to whether you have approved the petition as written or are withdrawing your approval of the petition."

It was the unanimous opinion of the board that Biggs' claims of contradictory communications are completely unfounded and that the wording of both referenced district letters was clear, consistent, and complete with no contradiction whatsoever.

The wording in the most recent cover letter for the blank petition signature forms, which Biggs and John Dominowski submitted to MSD for approval, implies that if MSD is dissolved, its assets will be turned over to the Town of Monument for future operations. While this isn't necessarily what the outcome will be, the relevant section of Colorado Revised Statutes (CRS 32-1-702) allows the petition writer the freedom to write whatever is desired in the Full Text of Proposed Measure section of the cover letter; there is no test or review of the truthfulness of this section in the statutes.

The MSD board complied with the section of the law that (CRS 32-1-701) obligates them to evaluate any and all entities that could take over district operations upon dissolution by a district court judge. Then in good faith, the board would devise a takeover plan for whatever entity is considered to be best qualified to take over the district.

Therefore the wording in


the Summary of Proposed Measure on the form that people will actually sign makes no reference to the town or any other entity taking over MSD operations if the district is dissolved.

The board asked Gaddis to notify Biggs and Dominowski of the potentially confusing discrepancy in the approved petition cover letter and also advise them that signature gatherers should not tell petition signers

that the town would take over MSD operations. This would not be the first time Gaddis has done so. In a letter to them dated July 21, Gaddis wrote:

"The Town of Monument is certainly one of the options that the board would consider, however, it is not the only option and it would be a violation of the board's fiduciary duty

(Continued on page 24)



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to restrict itself to only one option. We caution you not to misrepresent to the Town of Monument or to persons who may sign the petition that the Monument Sanitation District

will only negotiate with the Town of Monument to take over the sanitation district.... Please do not misrepresent the law to people who may be asked to sign the petition. If you do, it may

well invalidate those signatures.”
What happens next? If Biggs and Dominowski collect enough signatures (the lesser of 250 or 5 percent of MSD’s eligible electors), the district would then be required to file a second legal document, called a Petition for Dissolution, with the court within 60 days, with the list of signatures attached. This second petition would be accompanied by a proposed timetable for good faith research and analysis, which would be needed in order to create a complete plan to have another municipality, utility, or special district take over MSD operations.

would then choose to accept or reject the dissolution.
The board spent about an hour reviewing the history of the previous (1992) and current dissolution issue and each pertinent document for newly appointed board member Chuck Robinove. In the 1992 case, the Town of Monument attempted to take over the district on its own initiative.
After this discussion concluded, Wicklund asked the board to create a contingency policy for the employees’ severance/retirement package in case the district is dissolved.

Other business
The board unanimously approved placing a lien on the property at 483 Washington St., for extended failure to pay the monthly MSD service fee. If the overdue payments are not made, they will be added to the homeowner’s annual property tax bill by the county.
Robinove suggested that the board invest in having a variety of sewer line positions and easement boundaries superimposed on aerial photos of the district using Geographical Information System computer software. The board unanimously endorsed having him solicit information and costs for having a consultant perform this task.
The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m. The next meeting will include the formal 2005 budget hearing and will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Dec. 14 at the MSD office at 130 Second St.



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Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility Joint Use Committee, Nov. 8

By Jim Kendrick

The Joint Use Committee (JUC) for the Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) finalized its budget proposal for 2005 and discussed plans to examine alternative methods to remove nitrogen and ammonia should the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) tighten standards on the concentrations allowed in the plant's discharge. Plans were discussed to increase the staff of the facility and to evaluate in-house management of the facility rather than using one of the owner districts as the managing agent.

All representatives from the three owning districts, Monument Sanitation District, Palmer Lake Sanitation District, and Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, attended the meeting at the Monument Sanitation District.

Permit renewal

The JUC is seeking renewal of its wastewater discharge permit by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. Negotiations with the state and EPA are being conducted by attorney Tad Foster, an expert in environmental and permit law.

There appears to be agreement that the current limits for potentially dissolved copper may be increased from 12.0 parts per billion on average and 17.6 parts per billion on a single test for water discharged to Monument Creek to a temporary limit of 25 and 36 parts per billion, respectively. However, the final values may actually be more restrictive than the current regulation, 8.7 and 13.0 parts per billion, respectively.

About 5 parts per billion is the lower limit of actual detection of the presence of any potentially dissolved copper with current technology, so this is a very rigorous standard. The maximum concentration allowed for human consumption is 1200 parts per billion, but aquatic life has been shown to be far more susceptible to harm from much lower copper concentrations. The science regarding appropriate acceptable levels for aquatic life for any of the heavy metals is not well known at this time and causes a great deal of uncertainty for sewer districts nationwide.

Study sought

The JUC unanimously agreed to seek a study on how to collect data and model nitrate, ammonia, and total inorganic nitrogen processes for the wastewater that the WWTF treats. Members of the JUC asked to see a resume of the scientist who proposed the study, and conditionally approved funding of \$8,000 for the study, pending a satisfactory review of William Lewis's credentials. Lewis is president of Western Environmental Analysis.

Data collection may cost between \$15,000 and \$20,000 and will take a minimum of 12 months (2005) to cover all seasons. Like potentially dissolved copper, the amounts are hard to measure directly, so the tests have to measure them indirectly. Standards for nitrates and ammonia have been changed to maximum daily amounts from 30-day averages.

Engineering consultant Mike Rothberg of Rothberg, Tamburini, and Winsor (RTW) had previously told the JUC that the plant would have exceeded these new, much tighter proposed standards on a few occasions in the recent past. It is uncertain whether increased monitoring by plant operators, new automatic instrumentation and process controls, or new major construction would be required to meet daily standards.

Automatic instrumentation and process controls are estimated to require six months to design and install and another six months to test. They would cost about \$300,000. The cost estimate for new construction for a recycling system is about \$1.5 million and would take about a year to complete.

Lab building construction

Rothberg issued a public notice for prequalification of contractors who can design and build the new WWTF lab building to be built south of the current office building. After builders are screened, a request for proposal (RFP) will seek competitive bids for design and construction of the proposed 2,500-square-foot lab/administration building.

Deadline for prequalification packages was to Nov. 26; the candidates selected would be announced Dec. 3. Bids are then due by Dec. 31. Final selection and notice of award for design and construction will be Jan. 7. RTW will also be responsible for gaining site approval. The building will cost about \$407,500.

Management agreement approved

The annual renewal of the management agreement for WWTF operations passed unanimously. Currently, the Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District supervises operations of the WWTF under a management agreement. While there has been a lot of discussion in the past about having WWTF manager Bill Burks take over all aspects of administration, the unexpected complexity of recent permit issues will likely require his full attention until the new permit is approved.

Members of the JUC all agreed, however, to move toward making the WWTF an independent, subordinate entity after the permit is approved and any required construction is completed. The current management fee charged by Woodmoor for administration and payroll processing is about \$28,000 per year.

The next Joint Use Committee meeting will be at 6 p.m. Dec. 13, at the Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District office.



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Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, Nov. 9

By Jim Kendrick

On Nov. 9, the Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District Board approved a rehabilitation program for its older vitreous clay pipe sewer lines that includes high pressure cleaning followed by visual television camera inspection. The board also approved its mill levy and scheduled its final budget hearing for Dec. 14. District Manager Phil Steininger was excused from the meeting.

Where necessary, pipes that are

over 25 years old and show any signs of deterioration are being repaired by installation of a PVC liner through existing manholes, to avoid unnecessary excavation of roadways and easements. The liner improves flow to the equivalent of newly installed PVC sewer lines. Access to the mains from individual customer sewer lines is restored by using a remote controlled hole saw and television camera to cut a hole in the liner where the customer's stub connects to the outer

clay pipe. Installation will take place between mid-November and mid-December.

Permit limits discussed

Engineering consultant Mike Rothberg, of RTW, Inc., reported on progress being made to renew the permit for the Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF), which Woodmoor owns in equal shares with the Monument and Palmer Lake Sanitation Districts. He noted that consultant attorney Tad Foster had successfully negotiated temporary higher copper limits, twice the current maximum values allowed in the plant's discharged treated water.

Foster persuaded the state's water quality control board to reverse its initial position of not allowing a transitional compliance period to test and evaluate data on the actual concentrations of several heavy metals in the water delivered to Monument Creek from the WWTF. There were two occasions this year where the amount of copper discharged was higher than the current one-day limit of 17.6 parts per billion. The current average limit is 12.7 parts per billion for a single month, with two measurements per month.

WWTF manager Bill Burks noted that the WWTF Joint Use Committee may have some concerns about meeting maximum discharged nitrogen limits as colder weather approaches. He recommended purchase and installation of variable baffles that would more precisely control the amount of air and oxygen added to the two basins that initially treat wastewater after sludge and scum have been removed. The baffles would allow the air pumps to run more continuously, reducing the number of times the blowers are turned on and off, which would extend their life.

Rothberg recommended that the three districts hire the consultant who wrote the model used to

measure ammonia concentrations for WWTF standards used throughout the state. The board conditionally approved the study contract for \$8,000, pending a review of the consultant's credentials for the record. The cost of the baffles was estimated to be \$180,000.

Transit loss model

Rothberg noted that work on a transit loss model for the Palmer Divide Water Group is moving forward. The model, which needs to be updated, is used to give accurate and appropriate credit to all water and sewer entities for the amount of water they return to creeks and streams that feed into the Arkansas River. Some members of the water group may drop out now that multiyear state grants that paid part of their membership fees have been used up. This will raise the membership and study fees for those districts and municipal utilities that continue to be members.

Well 8

Work on Well 8 by drilling consultant Layne Western has shown that the failed pump had some bacterial contamination on the pump's screens and was clogged by 10 feet of fine silt in the drop pipe. The pipe will be replaced.

Service to the Wahlborg property

The developer for the Wahlborg addition has signed the inclusion and excess water agreements required for Woodmoor to provide water and sewer service to the parcel. The addition was annexed into the town of Monument on Aug. 16. There was a one-page amendment to the excess water agreement, slightly reducing the amount of excess water the developer may request and his cost for the option.

The board conditionally approved the two documents unanimously, pending submission of the developer's signature and payment. When those are received, Erin Smith, the district's attorney, will file the two agreements. The district will only provide the main water and sewer lines to the edge of the parcel. All other infrastructure installations will be done by the developer, subject to the district's approval.

Upcoming developments

The Walters Common development is moving forward with 8-inch water mains; the 10-inch sewer mains will connect to the Higby Road main extension. There will be some re-

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routing of the lines on Bowstring Drive and Higby Road before construction begins in late November.

The district is preparing the wording for construction agreements for the two Herbic parcels (formerly the old Scala and Turse properties). Construction of water and sewer connections to the parcels will begin next year. The owners of these parcels will reserve the maximum permitted amount of administrative excess water, as will Hope Montessori School.

The school is expanding and will tear down the existing structure to build a new larger one. Board member Benny Nasser and district civil engineer Jessie Shaffer agreed that the maximum amount of allowed excess water should be recalculated for each annual renewal of optional excess water agreements.

Mill levy

The board unanimously certified the mill levy for 2005, which will remain at 9.5 mills. The final budget hearing is scheduled Dec. 14 at 11:30 a.m. in the district conference room at 1845 Woodmoor Dr. The meeting is earlier than the normal 1 p.m. start time due to the staff Christmas party scheduled for that afternoon.

The Woodmoor Country Club will be asked to pay its monthly water bill more promptly. Their bill typically exceeds \$5,000, the threshold for quicker reimbursement by very large water users. The board unanimously approved a resolution that includes new wording that allows the district to more aggressively and promptly seek payment from entities with such large billings.

The board unanimously approved conditional adoption of new regulations that place more responsibility on developers and builders to provide quality assurance and quality control. This can be accomplished with help of the engineers from the consultant engineering firms that developers and builders routinely hire for other work. The regulations will be put in place as soon as Smith has

reviewed and approved them.

Developers will now be responsible for providing the district with a single source within their organization who will complete all required reports twice a week and also obtain water and sewer system certifications.

In the district engineer report, Rothberg noted that construction of the new 2,500-square-foot office and laboratory building at the WWTF will take about 10 months. Studies will be made to determine if removing copper in the water discharged by the WWTF by electrolysis (electro-plating) is feasible. A drawback to this method of copper removal is that the copper is replaced by a significant amount of iron, which would require additional filtration.

Nasser noted that final budget figures for the WWTF lab building, automated aeration equipment, and a new third plant operator were now listed in the 2005 WWTF budget that was reviewed at the facility's Joint Use Committee meeting the previous evening. The facility's operating budget is now \$575,292, and capital improvements will cost about \$715,000, including \$329,000 for the new office/lab building and \$283,000 for the automated variable aeration baffles.

Board member Dick Durham said he was closing on a new house outside the district on Nov. 29, but had not sold his current home yet. When it does sell, he said he will resign from the board.

The board went into executive session on personnel matters at 2:20 p.m. The session was expected to last about an hour, and no announcements were to be made after its conclusion.

The next meeting will be held at 11:30 a.m. on Dec. 14. Board meetings are normally held at 1 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the month in the district conference room at 1845 Woodmoor Drive.




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Triview Metro District, Nov. 17

By John Heiser

At its regular meeting Nov. 17, the Triview Metropolitan District Board of Directors discussed the status of various developments within the district and adopted the 2005 budget.

Water and sewer service to the Watt properties
At the October meeting, Monument Mayor Byron Glenn told the board that state law requires the properties near Baptist Road and I-25—including the parcel occupied by Foxworth-Galbraith—which the town forcibly annexed on January 6, 2001, must be provided water and sewer service within three years. He said that since the time limit has passed, the property owners could petition for deannexation. He noted that the town has no facilities in the area and asked if Triview would be willing to extend service to the properties. The property is not currently in the Triview district. It relies on a well and septic system.

Mike Watt, one of the owners of the parcel occupied by the Foxworth-Galbraith as well as two adjacent undeveloped parcels, said, “The town came to us. I never fought it. We get fire and police service and that is it. The town is collecting sales tax—it is a big number—and not having to provide services. I have a problem philosophically with what the town has done. They should do what’s right.”

Referring to difficulties regarding the easement for the Monument Marketplace sewer interceptor that passes through his properties, he added, “My family was very helpful to your board within the last year.”

Peter Susemihl, attorney for the Triview district, said, “Everybody knew the town would not be providing service. The idea was that your property would need water and sewer and you would come into the district.”

Noting that Triview’s policy is to provide

service only to properties that are included in the district, Susemihl asked Watt if he wanted to be included. Watt said he did not, because of the additional 25 mills of property tax he would have to pay. Susemihl said the district could not waive Watt’s property tax. He noted that in a case in the 1970s, the court sided with a district that was setting different mill rates within its district but then Susemihl added, “The bond people won’t allow you to do it.”

Glenn said, “The town needs to fulfill a promise we made in 2000-2001.” He suggested the town develop an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with the district to provide service to the property. He added he may have to do “some arm twisting” with the town board to accomplish that.

Susemihl said there is a concern the district could be setting a precedent for other out-of-district properties. He said it is a political issue but not a legal one since this property involves special circumstances.

Rick Blevins, representing Vision Development, Inc., said the sewer connection would involve “a few hundred feet of line and a manhole.”

Triview manager Ron Simpson added, “The water line extension will be costly.”

Susemihl said, “You can’t force a property outside the district to connect. There is no point to providing service where it isn’t needed.”

He added that the new IGA could be for services to be provided later and could specify a date when the Watt properties would be included in the district. “You could wind up with a three-way agreement between the Watts, the town, and the district,” he said, stressing that “the district can’t allow the other two [Watt] properties to develop without being in the district.”

Susemihl said further development of the agreement would depend on obtaining estimates of the cost to provide service.

Development status

Blevins reported as follows:

- Lariat Ranch Filing 3 has been renamed Settlers Ridge. Paving is to be completed by Nov. 26. Model homes will be started soon. The plat is at Monument Town Hall awaiting final sign-off.
- Phase G1 to extend Jackson Creek Parkway and Leather Chaps Drive and provide water and sewer service to the Marketplace is complete. Blevins presented a breakdown of costs and an explanation of the approximately \$647,000 overrun on the \$8.146 million project. The overrun was covered by developer loans that will be converted to subordinated district bonds. Blevins said \$398,000 of the overrun was supplemental work, including additional landscaping not part of the original \$7.5 million budget. The remaining \$249,000 overrun on the budgeted work is 3.32 percent. Blevins noted that the overrun was small considering the difficulties encountered, especially the problems installing the sewer interceptor in Baptist Road.

- Improvement of the Baptist Road interchange “has been moved up on the [state’s] priority list.”

Monument Planning status

Mike Davenport, assistant town manager and town planner, reported as follows:

- Vision Development’s plan for the 200,000-square-foot big-box pad site A in the Marketplace is being reviewed by the county’s

Major Transportation Technical Committee to determine the road improvements needed to handle the increased traffic. Blevins, who submitted the Marketplace pad A site plan, said later that Wal-Mart has not yet signed a contract for the site.

- Transit Mix is expected to submit an application for a concrete batch plant near the Upper Monument Creek Regional Waste Water Treatment Facility (WWTF) south of Baptist Road, adjacent to the Air Force Academy (USAFA) property. The town’s review of the application will address a variety of aspects including noise and dust from the plant. The USAFA is expected to submit comments.

WWTF expansion

The WWTF is jointly owned by the Triview district, the Donala district that serves Gleneagle, and the Forest Lakes Metropolitan District that currently does not have any users.

Chuck Ritter of Nolte and Associates, engineering consultant for the district, reported that the WWTF expansion working group is starting to coordinate with governmental review agencies.

He said, “The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has decreed that the site is not in mouse habitat.”

He noted that debate continues as to the mechanism for funding the project; that is, whether all the money must be placed in an account at the beginning of construction or whether utility bonds can be issued by the bond trustee for progress payments during construction. Triview’s 52 percent portion of the cost of expansion is estimated at \$4.4 million.

Susemihl said Dana Duthie, manager of the Donala district, was misreading a paragraph in the WWTF joint operating agreement that requires upfront funding for initial construction of the plant. Susemihl said, “It doesn’t apply.”

Ritter said Mountain View Electric has submitted a bill to Triview for \$13,700 to relocate a power line as part of the project. The district is working with the other two districts to obtain their portions of that payment.

Sewer overflows

Ritter said two residential sewer overflows occurred: one in March 2002 and another in January 2003. He said they were due to construction debris in the sewer. Governmental agencies are now investigating the incidents and determining what fines the district will have to pay.

Simpson said that in one of the incidents, someone had filled up a manhole with dirt.

Susemihl said to the board, “You are responsible as the provider.”

Review and comment fee

Regarding the Jackson Creek Market Village project, Simpson said, “There have been a lot of costs due to drainage and traffic issues.” He said the district is currently carrying review and comment costs until the developer provides reimbursement. Blevins suggested developers should pay the fee when they submit an application.

Snow removal

Regarding a recent snowstorm, Simpson said, “No one is pleased with the initial effort [by Timberline, the district’s new snow removal contractor]. Some subdivisions were not touched, some streets were not plowed. There is a little [on-the-job training] going on.”

Speed limits

Simpson said the district received a letter from the town increasing the speed limit to 35 mph on Lyons Tail from Jackson Creek Parkway to Leather Chaps and on Leather Chaps north of Creekside Middle School. The town’s letter said the change was based on recommendations from the town’s engineer and traffic engineering consultant SEH, Inc. Simpson said the district has voiced its objection to the in-

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Susemihl said, “Such changes are common when the traffic is totally ignoring the speed limit.”

Steve Stephenson, president of the Triview board, described the town’s action as “insensitive to reality.”

2005 budget

A public hearing was held on the revised Triview budget for 2005:

- Stephenson noted that Triview salaries are considerably below the national average as a percentage of the budget. Later, the board unanimously approved director Joe Martin’s motion to change the compensation increases for Simpson and the other district personnel from 3.5 percent to 7 percent.
- Blevins said Vision Development is “not satisfied 100 percent” with the revised budget. He asked about funding for the WWTF expansion, how the water augmentation issue would be handled, and whether there would be any in-kind participation by homeowners or developers in the improvement of the Heights trail. Stephenson said the Heights trail is the only one without irrigation. He noted that improving the trail would benefit the bondholder and the district because property values and property taxes would increase.

The board unanimously approved the revised budget subject to adjustment based on the end of November report from the county assessor’s office of the total assessed values

and estimated property taxes. The mill levy will be certified at the next meeting, Dec. 9.

Forest Lakes parcel

The Forest Lakes district is being divided into two taxing metropolitan districts and a master metropolitan district. The master district is called Pinon Pines Metropolitan District #3. Susemihl said the Forest Lakes district wants to transfer the WWTF parcel jointly owned with Donala and the Forest Lakes district from the Forest Lakes district to Pinon Pines master district.

The board unanimously approved excluding the parcel from the Forest Lakes district and including it in the Pinon Pines district. Ownership of the property is unchanged.

Bond payment

The district made a \$750,000 payment of interest on the subordinated bonds held by the developer. Simpson remarked, “That is \$50,000 more than last year.”

The meeting ended with an executive session to discuss “threatened or pending litigation.” Blevins was asked to stay to discuss the water augmentation issue.

The Triview Metropolitan District Board of Directors normally meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month, 4:30 p.m., at the district offices, 174 N. Washington St. In order to submit the approved final budget to the state by Dec. 15, the next meeting will be held Dec. 9.

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



Triview Meeting, Nov. 17: Clockwise from the left: property owner Mike Watt; Vision Development representative Rick Blevins; Triview manager Ron Simpson; Directors Martha Gurnick, Chuck Burns, Steve Stephenson, Julie Glenn, and Joe Martin; Triview engineering consultant Chuck Ritter; Triview attorney Peter Susemihl; and Monument Mayor Byron Glenn. *Photo by John Heiser*

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Lewis-Palmer District 38 School Board, Nov. 18

By Tommie Plank

Lewis-Palmer High School (LPHS) students Bruce Case, John-Paul Ceballos, Shawna Fehrman, Katherine Magerko, and Alex Souza were among the 100 area students selected to this year's Mayor's 100 Teens from the Colorado Springs area. These students have been recognized for their achievements and service to others, and were at the meeting to receive commendations and to talk about their philosophies of life.

Johnie Watkins and Ed Givens, LPHS Student Council officers, updated the Board on the many projects and activities in progress at the high school. These include the Harvest of Love, the bottle cap project, Sadie Hawkins dance, trash problems at the school, Drive Smart, "The Little Shop of Horrors" play, the University of Northern Colorado faculty brass quartet visit to LPHS, the cheer-leading competition, and the DECA regional competition. They also complimented Activities Director Craig Ketels on the tremendous job he has been doing this year coordinating school activities.

Lewis-Palmer Middle School teachers Virginia Monroe, Kristen Boyd, and Cyinda Engelman reported on their collaborative efforts to increase student achievement and

teacher effectiveness as part of their school's Professional Learning Community (PLC) efforts. They recently conducted a review of the elements of PLC with the teachers at their school and surveyed what stages they believe they currently fit. Superintendent Dave Dilley commended them on their efforts.

The district audit report for the fiscal year ended June 20, 2004, prepared by the firm of Hoelting & Company, was received and accepted. The overall condition of the district is good and fiscal management is sound.

Carl Hurst of Siemens Company updated the Board on the progress of the energy savings systems and procedures in the district. Several district facility improvement measures have been completed, including installation of a heat pump heating and cooling system in the district Administration Building, a cooling system in Lewis-Palmer Elementary School, and low-energy lights throughout the district. Significant savings in energy costs are projected, and they will continue monitoring usage and costs.

Hal Garland, Director of Transportation, updated the Board on improvements to lessen traffic congestion around Creekside Middle School and Lewis-Palmer High School. The

opening of Jackson Creek Parkway has greatly increased traffic at both schools.

Triview Metropolitan District has made improvements around Creekside, totaling \$23,430. The Town of Monument and Mountain View Electric each donated \$5,000 to help offset these costs, and the school district made other improvements of about \$1,990.

At LPHS, the district has worked with El Paso County Department of Transportation and the El Paso County Sheriff's Department. The District is paying for a traffic control officer while determining the feasibility of installing traffic signals on Higby by the entrance to LPHS.

In compliance with Colorado state law, the Board must examine its school director districts every four years to assure they remain as equal as possible in representation. Denny Hill and David Porter of Strategic Resources West presented the board with three possible scenarios for re-apportionment of director districts. They used U.S. Census data and housing data to identify changes in population. The Board will make a decision regarding changes to director district boundaries in December.

Mary Anne Wiggs, Director of Curriculum, discussed math initiatives that are in progress in the district to improve math achievement at all grade levels. She also reviewed the pre-collegiate curriculum requirement that is being phased in to meet admission standards to Colorado four-year colleges and universities.

The Board approved revisions to the Transitional Retirement Incentive Program, which are needed as a result of new legislation requiring an employer contribution be paid to the Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) for any retiree working for a PERA-affiliated employer. The cost of this contribution will be paid from the salary of the retiree beginning July 1, 2005.

Hugh Eaton and Bob Manning will be leaving the Board next November due to term limits. The Board will schedule work sessions for prospective new board members after the first of the year. The purpose of the sessions will be to familiarize potential candidates with the work involved with being a school board member and the complex nature of the job.

District Advisability and Accountability Committee (DAAC) chairman Karen D'Amour reported that the November meeting was an informative site visit to Palmer Lake Elementary School, which is on track with its accreditation goals. There will be no December DAAC meeting; the next meeting will be a Jan. 11 site visit to the high school.

The Board recognized several individuals who worked hard on behalf of the Board during the recent election campaign. Presented with commendation certificates were Kathy Weiler, Tim Rector, Steve Corder, Mary Brown, Deborah Goth, Amy O'Dair, Karen D'Amour, Jerry Losey, Joanne Jensen, Terry Casey, and LouAnn Dekleva.

In a discussion of the Nov. 2 election, Board members expressed a need to step back for a while to take time to evaluate what could have been done differently to change the outcome of the election. They stated they wanted to avoid making emotional or speculative assumptions, and agreed there was no mandate in the election results. They also agreed that there are other high priority issues in the district that need to be addressed before refocusing on capacity needs at the high school level.

They again encouraged parents and patrons to become more involved in the schools, which they believe will result in better understanding of school issues.

The next regular meeting of the School Board will be held Dec, 16 at the Administration Building at 7 p.m.



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County Planning Commission, Nov. 16, 23, 30

By Steve Sery

A new milestone: There were three Planning Commission meetings in one month. The upcoming increases in fees and new faces on the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) has developers scrambling to get their applications in prior to the end of the year.

Commissioners heard a variance of use to allow a dog/daycare kennel in the Planned Industrial zone. The property is located east of Monument Hill Road, south of County Line. There is no zoning in the area that allows this type of business, so a variance is required. (The new zoning regulations, discussed later, will likely address this.) The variance for Camp Bow Wow was approved.

A cell phone tower for Nextel at the intersection of Shoup and Black Forest Roads was approved. It will be a “stealth” tower that simulates the pines in the area.

A final plat for Cathedral Pines was approved after much discussion. This development is north of Shoup Road and 1 mile east of Highway 83. Primary access will be adjacent to Black Forest Regional Park, requiring condemnation of portions of lots adjacent to the park. This is in litigation, and there was some question as to the advisability of moving forward with a final plat, pending settlement of the lawsuit. There should be more coming on this before it actually proceeds.

A rezone from RR-3 (5-acre lots) to PUD (Planned Unit Development) for Settlers Ranch was denied. This project is just north of Hodgen Road and one-quarter mile east of Highway 83. The proposed density violated the small area plan. This may either go directly to the BOCC for consideration as is or come back to the Planning Commission with minor adjustments to make it more compatible.

A proposal to rezone from RR-3 to PUD and a preliminary plan for Walden Preserve was approved. This is the final phase of Walden Preserve, a development located south of Walker Road and east of Highway 83. The development is a mix of large and small lots. The Planning Commission’s opinion was that it did not change the character of the existing portion of Walden Preserve.

The third meeting was to review Module 1 of the new Land Development Code and nine “quick fixes” to the existing code. This meeting was open to the public; four people attended, all from the Black Forest Land Use Committee.

There were a number of issues with the process. The Land Development Code (LDC) is the binding document that covers zoning regulations and development procedures. It is as important as the Major Transportation Corridors Plan, which had multiple public meetings and open houses. The LDC has had minimal public input. The commission decided to move forward with Module 1, as there will be opportunities to further review as it is coordinated with future modules.

Also discussed was the method of publicizing this meeting. The county uses the El Paso County News, published in Fountain, for legal notices. The requirement is that publication occurs in a newspaper of general circulation in the county. There is a question as to whether the El Paso County News

satisfies this requirement, and direction was given to the staff to look at other options.

Regardless of how notice of future meetings on the Land Development Code are announced,

public attendance at these meetings is important. The LDC is the planners’ and developers’ “bible” on what is allowed.

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Woodmoor Improvement Association board, Dec. 1

By Chris Pollard

Charles Pocock, Chairman of the board for the Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District (TLFPD), appeared first on the agenda to give a run down on the creation of the new Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Authority. He explained how the coverage areas for Tri-Lakes and Woodmoor/Monument Fire Protection District (W/MFPD) were not as relevant as they used to be and how there needed to be better coordination and coverage over a larger area. He said joining the fire districts together would create economies of scale in that less support staff would be needed. The Fire Authority was currently set up to take over operational control of the two districts but he noted that funding and accounting would remain separate for the time being.

He said he felt that with the combined operation there would be better response all around and there might be a chance that house insurance premiums could be reduced in some areas. He emphasized the fact that the firefighters were looking forward to the new way of operating.

The major concern for the WIA Board of direc-

tors was raised in a question from Susan Shields, the current Vice President. She asked how the new authority would address the issue of the current financial status and funding of the W/MFPD, which currently covers the Woodmoor area. This fire district currently has a significant cash balance whereas Tri-Lakes does not. Additionally, the mill levy is much higher for the Woodmoor area than for the Tri-Lakes coverage area. John Hildebrandt, the Tri-Lakes treasurer, who was also present, noted that he expected that because the Woodmoor tax base was not expected to grow very much he thought the Woodmoor Department would be underfunded in a few years. Both Pocock and Hildebrandt expressed the hope that there would be equalization of the mill levy between the different taxing districts over the next few years but the primary goal was to get better fire service by combining the two districts. It was also pointed out to the WIA board that two directors on the new fire authority board were residents of Woodmoor so that adequate representation was already in place.

In other matters, Gordon Reichal volunteered

his services for one of the WIA board positions that will become vacant at the end of the year. Currently, there are three people to fill the three openings.

Hans Post, the Director of Woodmoor Public Safety, gave a brief report on the formation of the new Palmer Divide Public Safety Group, a new body being formed in the area to coordinate fire, police, and other security issues. The idea for the group had grown out of the collaboration that started at the time of the Hayman fire. The current suggestion was that Woodmoor Public Safety would become an affiliate of this organization given its status as a non-police operation. He said he felt the goals of the organization were good and that considerable benefit could be achieved in the way of networking, coordination, and training. Some aspects of how the Woodmoor Public Safety group would work with them were still not settled and should be resolved before seeking a decision from the board.

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Salt is great for clearing roads and sidewalks of ice and snow in the winter. However, it can be downright rotten for your trees, according to the tree experts at the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA).

“Excessive exposure to salt can cause widespread damage to your trees, leading to permanent decline and sometimes death,” said Jim Skiera, executive director of the ISA. “The problem with salt damage is that it might not show up on your trees until summer, when deicing salt is the last culprit you would suspect.”

To minimize the damage done to trees by deicing salts, the ISA offers the following tips:

- Use less salt. Mix deicing salt with abrasives such as sand, cinders, and ash, or use

- alternatives such as calcium magnesium acetate and calcium chloride.
- Trees such as the sycamore maple, white spruce, willow, and birch tend to be more salt-resistant than other species, so consider planting those. How well they fare varies from climate to climate.
- Improve soil drainage. Add organic matter to your soil to help filter salt deposits.
- Irrigate to flush the salts from the soils in spring.
- Mulch sufficiently to reduce water loss.
- Control pest infestations and destructive tree diseases.

The ISA is a nonprofit organization supporting tree care research. For more information, visit www.treesaregood.com.

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Below: Keith Hernandez, owner of the Sweet Peas restaurant in the West End Center, offers any and all a free dinner on Thanksgiving Day



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November Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

November 2004 started cold and ended cold, with seasonal conditions in the middle. Overall, temperatures for the month were slightly below average and precipitation for the month (normally the second driest behind January) was well above average.

The month got off to a cold and snowy start, as the heavy snow that began to accumulate late on Halloween continued through the first day of the month, with many parts of the Tri-Lakes area picking up over a foot of wind-blown snow. Very cold air followed this storm, as lows dipped below zero for the first time this season on the morning of the 2nd.

Temperatures moderated under clear to partly cloudy skies through the 9th. Highs peaked in the low 60s during the second week of the month, before the next storm moved in late on the 9th. Most areas in Tri-Lakes received 3 to 5 inches of new snow by the morning of the 11th, with cool, unsettled conditions in the region through the 14th.

Quiet weather again returned through the 18th, then a series of weak storm systems brought cooler temperatures and snow from the 18th through the 21st.

As we moved toward the Thanksgiving holiday, cold air began to pool in Canada, ready to pounce on the Tri-Lakes region. The first shot of cold air moved in on the 23rd and 24th, with light snow and highs in the low 30s. However, Thanksgiving Day teased us with breezy, mild weather and highs in the 50s. Conditions changed quickly, though, and light snow was falling by Friday morning, as highs struggled into the upper 30s and low 40s.

The holiday weekend saw continuing reinforcements of cold air move into the area, along with bouts of light to moderate snow and blowing snow. Most of the Tri-Lakes region received between 2 and 6 inches of snow from the 26th to early afternoon on the 29th. Highs remained in the 20s on Saturday and Sunday, with teens for highs on the 29th. Tri-Lakes residents woke up to bone-chilling cold on the last morning of the month, with lows around 10 below zero.

So far this fall, we have seen average to slightly below-average temperatures and above-normal amounts of precipitation. This is a good start to the winter season,

and when combined with the fact that our high country already has an above-average snowpack, offers reasons to be optimistic about another green spring and summer.

A Look Ahead

December generally sees numerous sunny and windy days, with quick shots of snow in between. Average temperatures are typically cool through the month as highs fall from the low 40s during the first week to the low 30s by the New Year. Precipitation is also on the low side, with average amounts less than an inch, making December the third driest month of the year behind January and November. The previous two Decembers have been mild and dry compared to average, but if we continue the trend we have seen so far this year, expect colder than normal temperatures and above-average precipitation.

The official monthly forecast for December 2004, produced by the Climate Prediction Center (<http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/30day/>), is calling for equal chances of normal temperatures and precipitation. For a complete look at monthly climate summaries for the Tri-Lakes region, please visit <http://users.adelphia.net/~billkappel/ClimateSummary.htm>.


November 2004 Weather Statistics

Average High	41.9°
Average Low	19.5°
Highest Temperature	62° (on 6th, 8th)
Lowest Temperature	-10° (on the 30th)
Monthly Precipitation	1.34"
Monthly Snowfall	19.6"
Season to Date Snow	33.3"
Season to Date Precip.	11.70"

Remember, weather affects all of us every day and is a very important part of life for us on the Palmer Divide. If you see a unique weather event or have a weather question, please contact us at our_community_news@hotmail.com.

Bill Kappel is the KKTU 11 News morning meteorologist and a Tri-Lakes resident.


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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 editor@ourcommunitynews.org or mail to Our Community News, P.O. Box 1742, Monument, Colorado 80132-1742.

In response to 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.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in letters to our community should not be interpreted as the view of OCN even when the letter writer is a reporter for OCN.

Editors' response to complaints

OCN received two complaints regarding the front-page article in the Nov. 6 issue ("Woodmoor/Monument FPD Board fires Chief David Youtsey, Oct. 26").

Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District Chairman Charlie Pocock called to object to the lead paragraph. He said that during the Palmer Lake Water Committee meeting he had not said that Youtsey was about to be fired. OCN confirmed that his statement was made after, not during, the meeting. The article used the word "at," which could be interpreted as during or after the meeting.

Tri-Lakes district director and treasurer John Hildebrandt submitted a letter that was published in the Nov. 17 issue of the Tri-Lakes Tribune. In keeping with OCN's long-standing policy of not printing letters that have appeared in substantially the same form elsewhere, we have not included his letter here.

In the letter, Hildebrandt objected to the article's inclusion of background information obtained by OCN regarding negotiations on firefighter pay scales. While OCN's primary role is

to cover meetings, when an issue is complex and we feel additional explanation will aid the reader's understanding, research outside that meeting may be included.

Hildebrandt also objected to OCN's inclusion of Bob Harvey's letter of resignation. We received that letter in time for inclusion in the Nov. 6 paper and felt our readers would benefit from knowing Harvey's reasons. Hildebrandt then made sweeping accusations against OCN's coverage, seemingly based on his objection to statements made in Harvey's letter.

OCN has thoroughly investigated these complaints, and we stand by our coverage.

OCN Editorial Board

The voice of experience

I would like to compliment Jim Kendrick on his outstanding articles regarding the recent change in leadership at the Woodmoor Monument Fire District.

As Medical Director of a number of EMS agencies in the region—including formerly Woodmoor Monument Fire District—as well as being a local resident, I have had a special interest in these recent events. I have attended board meetings of the Wescott FD, Woodmoor/Monument FD (WMFD), and Tri-Lakes Fire Department (TLFD) in the past.

But I did not attend the WMFD board meeting when the decision was made to terminate Chief Youtsey. Because your articles had the detail and accuracy typical of OCN, I did not have to attend. (I notice that the *Tri-Lakes Tribune* seemed to cover little of Chief Youtsey's firing.)

With regard to Chief Youtsey's firing by the WMFD board, I was very surprised by what I read. How the WMFD board could so ignore what I believe to be commonly understood requirements for board business is beyond me. When a person is publicly terminated, the Ts must be crossed and the Is must be dotted, or the board sets itself up for civil legal action, if not criminal action. I don't blame Mr. Harvey for his position, as cited in the OCN story.

Coincidentally, in the early 1980s, I served on an EMS board in rural Oklahoma similar to these fire district boards. Our board elected to terminate the EMS administrator in an emergency meeting of the board. In contrast to the

WMFD board, our board did everything right and by the book. Nevertheless, the local DA convened a Grand Jury to look into the appropriateness and legality of our meeting. The DA elected to charge us with a violation of the Open Meeting Act. I was actually arrested while working in the emergency department of the local hospital one afternoon. All board members had to go to the County Courthouse and post a \$500 bond.

The DA then offered us a plea bargain whereby we would agree to a guilty plea as a misdemeanor and pay a \$50 fine. We refused to do that because we were not guilty. Each board member paid \$1,000 of their own funds for legal fees, and the thing went to court as a criminal proceeding. Our lawyer carved up the prosecution, and the case was thrown out.

So, these sorts of board proceedings have a special place in my heart. In Oklahoma, we did comply with the law—and we were very careful to do so—yet we still had significant problems.

I do not know much of the particulars of why the Chief was fired. There may have been some good reasons for this that I am not aware of. I, personally, liked and worked well with Chief Youtsey. As the former medical director, he treated me well and I think we had mutual respect. So from my perspective, it was sad to see him go.

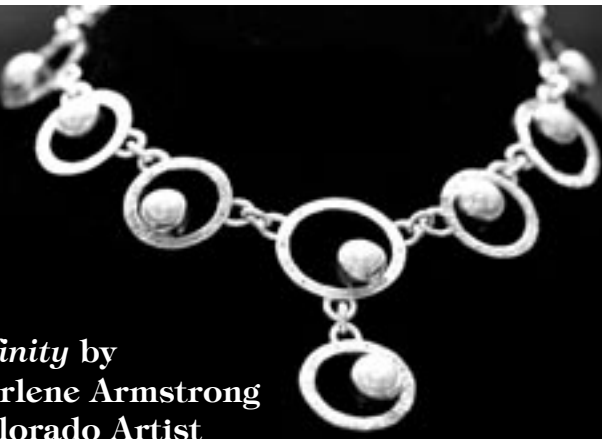
But the main point is not that Chief Youtsey was fired, it was the way he was terminated. The process appears to have been shockingly inept, and I would be surprised if the district does not encounter legal activity as a result.

I have good memories of my time with WMFD. In addition to enjoying my work with Chief Youtsey, I also greatly appreciated the WMFD firefighters. They are an excellent group, and I think that they have the community's interest at heart. I feel the same way about the TLFD firefighters that I have had occasion to meet.

Nevertheless, it is very concerning to read of the circumstances of Chief Youtsey's termination. I think the process places the fire district at an unnecessary legal risk.

Once again, I commend Jim Kendrick and OCN on your continued great work in covering these meetings. OCN provides a tremendous service to the public, whether they realize it or not.

Dr. Dave Ross



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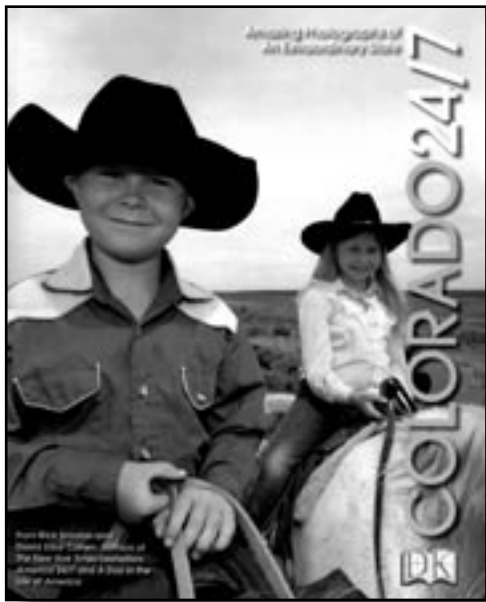
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Between The Covers at the Covered Treasures Bookstore

Checking it twice...



By Judith Pettibone

Visions of the perfect gift dancing in your head? Is that unique, small trifle for the stocking still illusive? Or what about you—has your family been asking for suggestions? Now that we’ve put away the cornucopias, we are lighting our homes for the giving season. And a book is always the best gift ever. Here is a short list of tantalizing and distinctive choices.

America, the Beautiful

By Robert Sabuda, \$26.95

Describing this latest Sabuda offering as a pop-up book is like calling an Olympic luge run a neighborhood sledding hill. Many of you are already collecting Sabuda, and this new book will surely please and thrill. A paper-engineered Golden Gate Bridge with ships passing beneath? Amber waves of grain? A riverboat on the Great Mississippi? Yes, yes, and yes. And just wait until you see Sabuda’s rendition of the fruited plain and “from sea to shining sea.” As they say in *Shakespeare in Love*, “It’s a miracle!”

Mountain Ranges of Colorado

By John Fielder, \$75.00

Another miracle has to be this amazing state we live in—and John Fielder does it again. His latest photo essay captures the abundant beauty that surrounds us in Colorado. From its unusual pink “granite” cover, its vellum frontispiece of mountain range names laid over a map of the ranges, to its stunning photos and moving introduction, this book is an incredible tribute to our state. Fifteen years in the making, it honors the 40th anniversary of America’s Wilderness Act (1964-2004). Fielder says, “Though I’ve photographed around the nation and beyond, it’s Colorado that brings out the best in me. It is the most beautiful place I’ve ever been on Planet Earth.” Amen.

Colorado 24/7

\$24.95

Brought to you by DK Publishers, who produced the best-selling *America 24/7*, this is a book of “amazing photographs of an amazing state.” It would be the perfect gift for newcomers or for family and friends who have left the state. The most unique part of this gift is the customized cover you can create with your special digital photo uploaded to the DK web site. Imagine that wedding or anniversary captured forever on the cover of this book.

The Umbrella

By Jan Brett, \$16.99

There is always reason to celebrate when Jan Brett brings out her latest. Inspired by a visit to the Monteverde Cloud Forest in Costa Rica, Brett looses her wonderful artist’s eye on the jungle. Dense layered

drawings with hidden objects beguile the reader, as does the charming story of Carlos’ trip to the jungle with only his umbrella.

Life Is Good! Lessons in Joyful Living

By Trixie Koontz, Edited by Dean Koontz, \$17.99

Trixie is Dean Koontz’s golden retriever and is, apparently, his writing inspiration. Through the chemistry that exists between loving dog owner and dog, Koontz is able to share Trixie’s philosophy of life. In a nutshell, it is this: how to be happy every minute of every day. Well, even if you can’t succeed with “every minute,” these charming photos and wise doggy words—“Dog naps are cool. Catnaps are too short. Can work much better after a nice long dog nap.”—will surely entertain and please anyone, especially that dog-lover on your list.

Rocking Horse Christmas

By Mary Pope Osborne, \$5.99

One Christmas morning, a young boy finds a rocking horse under the tree. He leaps on “Shadow” and off they go. In the Osborne tradition, the pair race Seattle Slew, visit dinosaurs, and even capture outlaws. As the boy ages, Shadow is left to gaze out the window, questioning where his friend has gone. Eventually, Shadow is brought to the attic and completely forgotten. The ending, though predictable, is satisfying and heart-warming. The illustrations are muted but full of life and personality.

Pippin the Christmas Pig

By Jean Little, \$16.95

Everyone knows the story of Christmas, or so one thinks; however, Pippin, the little pink pig with a curly tail and big pink ears, does not. In this modern barnyard scene, Pippin overhears the animals bragging about their ancestors’ roles in the Christmas story. Pippin asks what the pigs did to help the holy child, and the animals mock him: “Pigs have nothing to give.” Dismayed, Pippin leaves the barn in a blizzard. Stumbling upon a young woman with a baby struggling in the storm, he leads her back to the barn, where the animals promptly give her love and warmth. The gentle, predictable ending of this manger tale will touch your hearts.

How Many Miles to Bethlehem?

By Kevin Crossley-Holland, \$16.95

Illustrator Peter Malone has captured the look of the Jewish village of Bethlehem and all the visitors there on the first Christmas. Each page tells the story of the events from one visitor’s perspective. A special interpretation of angels makes for lovely and unique illustrations. The story is classically beautiful, and one will treasure this book from season to season.

Stocking Stuffers

Sit & Solve, by Leslie Billig, \$4.95

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May you and yours enjoy the festivities and blessings of the holiday season. Hopefully, there will be time for “feet up” and a book. Until January, happy reading!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



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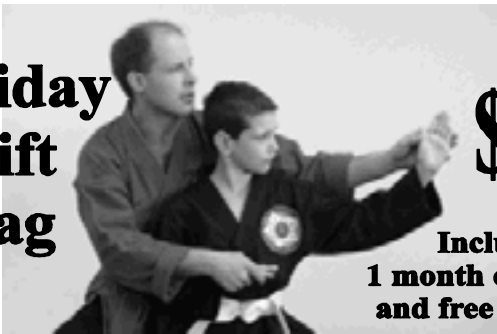
Local resident, Mary Alice Gernert, will sign her memoir and share stories about military life and her family. This will be a celebration of the life of one of her daughters, long-time local resident Mary Beth Emry, who tragically passed away 2 years ago.

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High Country Highlights

Winter Watering

By Woody Woodworth

This time of year in our beautiful state we experience fluctuating temperatures and arid climate conditions, with little or no precipitation. December is typically dry, and the small amount of snow that falls contains little moisture. Most of our wet snows arrive on the Front Range in early spring, around March.

In the meantime, while we wait for the spring snows to arrive, our trees, shrubs, perennials, and lawns can suffer drought conditions. In order to keep them healthy, follow a few basic guidelines for supplemental watering, courtesy of the Colorado State Cooperative Extension.

Newly planted trees are most susceptible to winter drought injury. Woody trees generally take one year to establish for each inch of trunk diameter. For example, a 2-inch diameter (caliper) tree takes a minimum of two years to establish under normal conditions.

Many trees have a shallow root system and will require additional water. These include European white and paper birches; Norway, silver, red, Rocky Mountain, and hybrid maples; lindens; alder; hornbeams; dogwood; and mountain ash.

Trees obtain water best when it is allowed to slowly soak into the soil to a depth of 12 inches. Winter methods of watering trees include sprinklers, deep-root fork or needle, soaker hose, or soft spray wand. Apply water to many locations under the dripline and beyond, if possible. If you use a deep-root fork or needle, insert no deeper than 8 inches into the soil.

As a general survival rule, apply 10 gallons of water for each diameter inch of the tree. For example, a 2-inch diameter tree needs 20 gallons per watering. Use a tape measure to determine your tree's diameter. Water once or twice a month.

Newly planted shrubs require more water than established shrubs that have been planted for at least one year. Evergreen plants that benefit from supplemental watering include spruce, fir, arborvitae, yew, Oregon grape-holly, and Manhattan euonymus. Woody plants benefit from mulch, which helps to conserve soil moisture.

The following recommendations assume shrubs are mulched to retain moisture. In dry winters, all shrubs benefit from winter watering

October through March. Apply 5 gallons twice a month for newly planted shrubs. Small established shrubs (less than 3 feet tall) should receive 5 gallons monthly. Large established shrubs (more than 6 feet) require 18 gallons on a monthly basis. Decrease amounts to account for precipitation. Put water within the dripline and around the base of the shrub.

Woody plants with shallow root systems require supplemental watering during extended dry fall and winter periods. Herbaceous perennials in exposed sites are more subject to winter freezing and thawing. This opens cracks in soil that expose roots to cold and drying. Winter watering combined with mulching can prevent damage.

Lawns also are prone to winter damage. Newly established lawns, whether seed or sod, are especially susceptible to damage. Susceptibility increases for lawns with south or west exposures.

Follow these basic guidelines for winter watering:

- Water only when air temperatures are above 40 degrees. Apply water at mid-day so it will have time to soak in before possible freezing at night. A solid layer (persisting for more than a month) of ice on lawns can cause suffocation or matting of the grass.
- Plants receiving reflected heat from buildings, walls, and fences are more subject to damage. The low angle of the winter sun makes this more likely in south or west exposures. Windy sites result in faster drying of sod and plants and require additional water.
- Monitor weather conditions and water during extended dry periods—one to two times per month without snow cover.

Woody Woodworth owns High Country Store and is a member of Garden Centers of Colorado and the Green Industry



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Five Tips for Holiday Shipping

It's time to start planning how you're going to ship your holiday gifts to their various destinations. Here are some tips to help ensure they arrive on time and intact:

Ship Early. Pay attention to the guidelines listed with the major shippers, U.S. Postal Service, UPS, and FedEx. The dates fluctuate from year to year, so it's always best to double-check with your local shipping service.

Be aware of any restrictions. Ask ahead of time about any rules regarding what types of items may or may not be shipped, packing guidelines, and size and weight requirements to avoid surprises at

the counter.

Consolidate your packages. Shipping one 20-pound box costs less than shipping two 10-pound boxes. It also means that there is only one package to track.

Enclose extra address labels inside the package. This is an added precaution in case things go awry and the package is damaged.

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On the Trail

Winter Trail Tips

By Tim Watkins

This time of year, Colorado has the unique ability to make us think it is spring, winter, or fall—all at once, on any given day. Heavy coats in the morning may give way to shorts and T-shirts in the afternoon.

The trails see areas of patchy or thick snow and ice. Some of this gets packed down and can be slippery, ruining knees, ankles, or other body parts. Adequate footwear is a must. As a cyclist, I try hard to avoid the bumpy, icy stretches of trail and go looking for less-treacherous terrain for my habit. Sometimes it is less backcountry and more roads and gravel paths, keeping the trails for the summer months so as not to create trail damage in muddy or wet, icy places. Avoiding wet trails makes for less maintenance and erosion in the future.

Hiking and exploring is sometimes a real

adventure. Just because one place is free of snow—because of its exposure to sun and wind—doesn't mean there isn't snow up higher or on north-facing, thickly treed slopes. Wandering and exploring these slopes is fun, but fallen trees lying beneath the snow can be as hazardous as ice if you are not careful how you step.

Move slowly and cautiously, putting weight down after testing each and every step. This little trick takes much practice. The beautiful terrain and often more secluded places in the hills just west of here are enhanced by the winter, and the experience of exploring with very little but the wildlife and the weather as company can be wonderful.

If you prefer solitude, be prepared and carry things you would want in case of an emergency—a bit of food, extra clothing (especially socks), a shelter of some kind, waterproof matches, plenty

of water, and a clear head. Cell phone service is not always reliable, but a map can be invaluable if you get lost or caught in storms that, around here, can come from nowhere.

If you are going out for a day trip, carry all you can to make sure of your safety (like a first-aid kit). Weather prediction has improved greatly over the years, so check weather and keep a wary eye, because clouds and cold can come on very quickly.

So as the ground calls us to explore new terrain on days that start out clear and bright, always keep in mind the threat of winter conditions and prepare yourself for those possibilities, whether riding or walking.

Big turnout for Annual Palmer Lake chili supper and star lighting

By Jim Kendrick

The Town of Palmer Lake hosted its annual chili supper on Nov. 27 at Town Hall from 5 to 8 p.m. The festive event was followed by the lighting of the town star. The money raised goes to the Palmer Lake Volunteer Fire Department for maintenance of the star. About 430 tickets were sold, and around 475 people attended the lighting of the star. Receipts totaled \$3,564, though event expenses and net revenue had not been computed at press time.

The menu included standard favorites: chili, potato soup, and cinnamon rolls. This is a unique, always popular event and a wonderful way for people to begin the holiday season.

Local merchants and business owners donated numerous door prizes that were given away throughout the evening.

There was also a bucket raffle. People buy as many of these special tickets as they like, then distribute them among the empty carry-out chicken tubs in front of prizes they would like to compete for. The winning ticket for each prize is drawn from the tub in front of it.

One prize is very special. This year's winner, Troy Oliver, got to flip the switch that lights the star. The Shady Lane resident is also known in town for his Fourth of July fireworks presentations.



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Bird Watch on the Palmer Divide

Chickadees

By Elizabeth Hacker

Recently Kathy Swango from Palmer Lake called to tell me that a chickadee was eating out of her husband's hand! I had read that chickadees were social birds but didn't realize they would actually take food from human hands.

Chickadees are small, social, and energetic songbirds with short, conical pointed bills. They are fairly common permanent residents of the Palmer Divide. Two species that live here are the black-capped (*Poecile atricapillus*) and mountain (*Poecile gambeli*) chickadees.

To me, the two species look alike. My husband can identify them at a glance because he says the mountain chickadee has a more streamlined black cap. They move so fast that I rarely see the mountain chickadee's white eyebrow, which distinguishes it from the black-capped. The male and female look the same as well.

Chickadees reside in wooded areas throughout North America, from the Mexican border north to Canada. They tend to live in the coniferous forests at altitudes generally between 5,000 and 10,000 feet. They are small, rather plump birds with strong legs that allow them to acrobatically feed in awkward positions, such as hanging upside down from the tip of the smallest branch.

Chickadees spend the nonbreeding season in flocks of one- or two-family groupings. They will also flock with other birds like the nuthatch and flicker. Flocking assists birds in their search for food. To keep the group together, they vocalize frequently in their familiar *chickadee-dee* call.

In late winter, pairs of chickadees will part

from the flock to secure territories for the spring breeding season. Courtship displays are not complex and include visits to possible nest sites and the ritual feeding of the female by the male. Chickadees are believed to mate for life.

They build a cup-shaped nest in a tree cavity. We often clean chickadee nests out of our bluebird houses, and they tend to be messy. The female constructs the nest, and the pair produces one brood per season. The adults continue to care for their young even after they fledged the nest.

Chickadees eat insects, seeds, and berries. I often observe them looking for insects in trees and poking their beaks in pine cones for nuts. They also frequent feeders and will politely wait in the branches for a space while the chickadees at the feeder take one sunflower seed and fly off to store or eat it. Soon they will be back, to again wait their turn at the feeder.

Chickadees are able to lower their body temperature to conserve vital energy reserves in winter when food is in shorter supply or a winter storm prevents them from foraging for food over a sustained period of time. While in this torpid state, they are able to fly, although feebly, to escape predators.

Maintaining bird feeders and watering stations in the winter will guarantee many opportunities to observe these endearing little birds. And if you are persistent, you may even have them eating out of your hand!

Elizabeth Hacker is an artist and freelance writer. E-mail your questions and bird finds to her at editor@ourcommunitynews.org



Left: Chickadee drawing by Elizabeth Hacker. A color version is posted at www.ourcommunitynews.org/v4n12bird.htm



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Reflections: Scratching that Genetic Itch

By Chase Davis

Like every other state in the Union, South Dakota (where I finished my degree...don't ask) has a state fair every summer, and this is where I noticed something of interest. There were two booths set up next to each other. In one booth was a man selling cookware, and in the other a man selling Ginsu knives.

What's the major discovery here, you ask? Well, at the booth with the man selling cookware, there were only two women watching. At the other booth, there were no women, but there must have been at least 20 men, not including their sons, standing around with huge grins on their faces and huge voids in their wallets. This vendor sold Ginsu knives faster than a man can click a remote. But why, you may ask? Most of those men don't even know where the kitchen is in their house, so why would they need a knife that will cut through a boot? (Personally, I think that if you need a knife that will cut through a boot, you're not buying the highest grade of meat currently available on the market.)

Why knives? Why do men love knives? I have a Ginsu knife (my father-in-law bought one for everybody in the family at—you guessed it—a state fair), and I've used it a total of two times. Once, to cut some frozen meat in two; I also almost cut off my finger—good thing my bone provide the necessary resistance to slow down the shearing force of the blade. The other time, I used it to cut dead branches off the Christmas tree.

This is what I call the Genetic Paradox. It is a man's nature—instinct, if you will—to kill his food out in the jungle or grassland. Ancient Man had to hunt daily and, with his bare hands, overcome and kill his food in order to survive. Having no grocery stores back then made things slightly more chal-

lenging.

Almost as challenging as un-sticking the plastic wrap from itself. And that's another thing. My wife cannot understand why I can't cover a food dish before putting it in the refrigerator (can you hear her laughing...like I actually put food away). But regardless, not covering the food is really a sanity issue. How can a man who can't even put the lid down be expected to un-stick plastic wrap from itself? There is some chemical bond holding those two sheets together so tightly that I submit using plastic wrap as reinforcement for concrete. Forget rebar, get an industrial size roll from Costco and start wrapping bridges. But Ancient Man couldn't see his food prepackaged, all wrapped up pretty and ready to go (modern man can't even follow a grocery list—but that's another story). Women, however, are uniquely different. Here's how:

A woman will get up before sunrise to go shopping for a coat. She will look everywhere for the perfect coat and come home empty-handed long after the sun has left the horizon. If asked why she didn't buy a coat, she will reply, "I didn't see any bargains." Now, to contrast, a man who is standing outside a store and realizes he is cold will say to himself, "I'm cold." He enters the store and asks if they sell coats. If they do, he walks back outside with a new coat and says to himself, "I'm not cold." If they don't sell coats, he walks back outside and remains cold.

Don't get me wrong; the differences between men and women are a wonderful thing. Men don't like to shop, so shopping for food that we haven't killed is the Genetic Paradox, a slap to the ego. But we are no longer in the jungle or the grasslands, so we must develop a system for which we can scratch the genetic itch to catch and kill our food. I can think of only one thing that can do that for us:

Infomercials.

How many of you have cable or satellite TV? How many of you women out there have seen your husband willingly watch QVC? If I were a betting man, I'd say very few. But those same men, who can't stand QVC, will sit mesmerized for hours watching another man cut paper-thin tomato slices—the whole time thinking of all the marvelous things he could cut if he just had that knife. (He'll also be thinking about how to order the knives, pay for the knives, and have them shipped to him without anyone finding out—I speak from experience.)

If you ladies always find yourselves wondering (around your husband's birthday or the holidays) "What can I buy for him? He is so hard to shop for. Another tie? Another wallet?" You may ask yourself, "How about another..."—you know what? I almost typed How about another tool? How silly of me. You can never go wrong with a nice piece of machinery. So how about a knife? We love knives. We carry them in our pockets, around our belts, in our trucks, toolboxes, basements—and if you ladies would let us, we'd probably wear them to bed. You just never know when you might need it.

My in-laws went to Europe one summer and bought me a genuine Swiss Army Knife. That knife has everything you could ever need. It has a magnifying glass, two screwdrivers, two blades, scissors, and a corkscrew. The corkscrew is for those times you're lost in the mountains and need to open that fine bottle of champagne you've been saving for just the right occasion. That knife is the best present I've ever gotten.

I guess to sum it all up, we can scratch the itch with a well-sharpened knife. And the best place to find a well-sharpened knife? The state fair, of course. Just look for the throng of men cutting their shoes in half. I'll save you a place in line!

Reality (TV) comes to Monument



Saturday, Nov. 13: Trista Rehn-Sutter (right) of TV's "Bachelorette" fame paid a visit to Jen Hanson (left), skin-care therapist and owner of Aesthetically Unique, where invited friends and clients attended a "B's" boutique purse party here in Monument's Chapala Bldg. All in attendance declared the purses adorable and Trista as nice as she is pretty. - Photo and caption provided by Jen Hanson

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Fire Marshal's Safety Tips

Christmas Trees and Lighting Safety

By Thomas W. Eastburn

Live fresh trees are wonderful to have for Christmas, and I enjoy selecting a permitted tree from the forest or one from a local tree vendor. I offer the following suggestions to reduce the risk of a tragic fire occurring in your home.

According to the fire code, a 6-foot tree can drink half a gallon or more of water per day. To aid your tree in absorbing water, before you secure it to the support device, make a new cut on the trunk about 1 inch above the original cut.

Because Colorado is a dry, semi-desert area, your tree can dry out quickly in your home or outside. To test for dryness, stand in front of a branch and grasp it with reasonably firm pressure. Pull your hand toward you, allowing the branch to slip through your grasp. If the needles fall off readily, the tree does not have adequate moisture content and should be removed from your home.

The key to stability of your tree is a properly sized supporting device that holds a tree in an upright position so that it:

- Does not damage or require removal of the tree stem base
- Holds the tree securely and is of adequate size to avoid tipping the tree over
- Is capable of containing a two-day minimum supply of water, covering at least 2 inches of the stem.

For taller trees, consider providing a second method of attachment for the upper portion.

Other tips:

- The tree should not be placed in an exit pathway in the home.
- Ensure indoor electric lights are in good condition and in working order.
- Before installing outside electrical lights, be sure they are in good working order and that

the cord and bulbs are not damaged.

- Attaching the lights to your home with metal staples will cause damage to the cord, resulting in an electrical hazard. Several manufactures make plastic covered staples for this application, which have a lower chance of damaging the wiring.
- Regarding ladders: Proper ladder placement will lessen your chances of a fall; the directions are written on your ladder. Make sure a second person is there to secure the ladder. Check the ground where you place your ladder for ice, loose gravel, and uneven terrain—choose another location if you're unsure about your safety. If you are in doubt about using a ladder, call the fire station for a basic safety lesson.

Be safe and enjoy the holiday season.

Thomas Eastburn is fire marshal for the Woodmoor/Monument Fire Protection District.

The Society Page: Society visits Yules of yesteryear

By Leon Tenney

The Palmer Lake Historical Society visited Yule Log celebrations of years past at the November meeting. Virgil Watkins gave a multimedia presentation of the photos and film clips of the Yule Log adventures from 1934 to present, exactly 70 years of memories. Todd Bell was the technical adviser for all the equipment, while Sandy Russell sold books.

Virgil began by telling us where the word Yule came from. Apparently some Norse guy dreamt it up! Lake Placid was the first American city to celebrate the Yule Log. Palmer Lake became the second in 1934, when a 7-foot-long splitter was acquired from the Lake Placid Log.

And wouldn't you know it, someone was there

with a 16mm camera and took pictures. We still have the camera. Back in the 1930s, people spent most of the time outdoors, and the pictures captured many, many moments for us to enjoy nowadays.

In those days, the folks who found the log sang carols on the way back to Town Hall. For those who do not frequent Palmer Lake, the Town Hall has "Yule Log" and not "Palmer Lake" over its entrance.

Fortunately, the next time someone took moving pictures was in the 1980s, when for some twist of fate most of the shots were indoors. For those who have attended many past Yule Log events, you might have been featured in these films.

During the break, we got to partake of the great food and drink prepared under the careful supervi-

sion of Paula Whittier, who has been nominated to be next year's Society president.

After the break, Virgil showed slides of the 1950s and 1960s Yule Log events to those interested in viewing them. The rest of us ate, drank, and talked.

This year, the Yule Log event is on Saturday, Dec. 12. It starts around noon at the Town Hall with eats and drinks. Then someone will blow a horn to start the hunt. If you are thinking of going, you should plan on dressing warm for the outdoor parts; inside the Town Hall is warm but usually packed.

See you next time, Jan. 20, at the annual pot-luck supper, at 7 p.m.

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For the Tri-Lakes Music Association, creating music during the Christmas season is a way to give back to the community. "We hope that families leave our concerts ready to celebrate the Christmas season with joy in their hearts," said Bob Manning, the association's founder and co-director.

The Tri-Lakes Music Association, formed six years ago to develop and perform a benefit Christmas concert, is preparing to present Phil Barfoot's "Portraits of Christmas" and other holiday selections at Lewis-Palmer High School on Dec. 10, 11, and 12. As in past years, the proceeds will be donated to Tri-Lakes Cares, which provides food and financial assistance for needy families.

The program will feature selections performed by the full band, the children's choir, a featured local church choir, and the Tri-Lakes Community Handbell Choir, as well as a performance of "Portraits of Christmas."

Admission is free and on a first-come, first-served basis. A free-will offering will be taken during the performance.

"The performers spend countless hours preparing for and putting on a very entertaining and festive concert," said Man-

ning. "We are not professional performers but are members of our local community who have a need, a desire to give back to the community in which we live."

"Tri-Lakes Cares has done so many good things in the community of Monument and is always in need of additional funding. The first annual concert raised approximately \$2,600 and the last two raised about \$4,000 each. We would love to top that amount this year but need everyone's help if we are going to be successful."

This event is funded by several local churches, community members, and businesses. For further information, visit the Tri-Lakes Music Association web site at www.trilakesmusic.org, or contact Bob Manning, 481-3883, or Nichole Murphy, 481-3903.



Special Events and Notices

Wayne Williams to speak in Monument

County Commissioner Wayne Williams will be guest speaker at the meeting of the Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO) **Dec. 4**, 10 a.m., at the Monument Branch Library, 1706 Lake Woodmoor Dr. The format will include a brief presentation by Williams, with the majority of time allotted for questions and comments or concerns. NEPCO is officially recognized by the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) as a representative organization that officially comments to the BOCC regarding local land use issues.

Monument Small Town Christmas

Historic Downtown Monument will be bursting with holiday activities and fun on **Dec. 4**. Events include crafts for kids beginning at 10 a.m. in the Monument Town Hall, a visit from Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus in Limbach Park at 10:30 a.m., hayrides from High Country Store between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., historic walking tours from Limbach Park at 12:30 p.m., other family activities and carolers singing throughout the day.

Tri-Lakes Community Christmas Handbell Concert

This year's holiday handbell concert, "Ring We Now of Christmas," is **Dec. 4** at 7 p.m. at Monument Community Presbyterian Church, 238 Third St. Traditional carols will be performed by youth and adult handbell choirs, with Monument Hill Brass Quintet and keyboards. Admission is free. For information, call Betty Jenik at 488-3853.

Yule Log Potluck Dinner at Palmer Lake

Bring a dish to share and come enjoy the festivities **Dec. 7**, 5 p.m., at Palmer Lake Town Hall. For more information, call 481-0475.

Community Christmas Concert to benefit Tri-Lakes Cares

The Tri-Lakes Music Association will present "Portraits of Christmas" and other holiday selections at Lewis-Palmer High School on **Dec. 10 and 11**, at 7 p.m. and **Dec. 12** at 2 p.m. Proceeds from the concert will be donated to Tri-Lakes Cares, which provides food and financial assistance for needy families. The full band, children's choir, a local church choir, and the Tri-Lakes Community Handbell Choir will perform. Admission is free, and a free-will offering will be taken during the concert. For more information, visit www.trilakesmusic.org or call Bob Manning at 481-3883 or Nichole Murphy at 481-3903.

Tri-Lakes filmmaker's documentary premiere

The Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum Foundation will premiere the video documentary "The Life & Times of General William Jackson Palmer" on **Dec. 11** at 1 and 3 p.m. in the historic Division 1 Courtroom on the museum's third floor. Over three years in the making, this one-hour documentary was written, produced, and directed by Emmy-Award nominee and local historian Jim Sawatzki, and is his 11th Pikes Peak regional video history. His work is seen on PBS affiliates and nationally on A&E's Biography Channel. This is the first-ever video/film biography on General Palmer, founder of Colorado Springs. This premiere showing is free and open to the public. Pioneers Museum is located at 217 S. Tejon St. in Colorado Springs. Reservations can be made by calling the museum at 385-5990.

A Holiday Harp Recital

Students of Renee Quinn's Harp Studio in Monument will perform for the public on **Dec. 11**, 2:30 p.m., at the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts, 304 Highway 105 in Palmer Lake. Special guest harpist Mari Honda will also play at this free concert. For more information, call 481-0111.

Palmer Lake's Annual Yule Log Hunt

Dec. 12 is the day of this popular event, which begins at Palmer Lake Town Hall at 1 p.m. Hunt participants should arrive between 11 a.m. and noon. The winner will ride the Yule Log back to town and get the first cup of wassail. Those preferring to stay indoors can help make wassail and enjoy a traditional holiday program and activities. For more information, call 481-0475.

Winter Celebration Art Exhibition

Winter, in all its glory, will be the focus of an exhibition at the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts in Palmer Lake. The Winter Celebration Art Exhibition **will run through Jan. 8**, 2005, and is free and open to the public. The Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts is open Tuesday through Saturday from noon until 5 and is located at 304 Highway 105 in Palmer Lake in the Kaiser Frazer building. The center offers art classes and a Gallery Gift Shop, with work from local artists for sale. For more information call 481-0475 or visit www.trilakesarts.com



Painting by Cindy Taffel included in the Winter Celebration Art Exhibition at the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts through Jan. 8

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- **Fridays at the Chamber sponsored by the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce**, Fri., Dec. 3, 8-10 a.m., 300 Highway 105, next to the Village Inn. The chamber welcomes members to its Friday Morning Coffees the 1st Fri. each month. Info: 481-3282.
- **Monument Small Town Christmas**, Sat., Dec. 4, 10 a.m., downtown Monument. Activities throughout the day include crafts for kids starting at 10 a.m. at Monument Town Hall, a visit from Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus at 10:30 a.m. in Limbach Park, historical walking tours from Limbach Park at 12:30 p.m., hayrides 11 a.m.-1 p.m. leave from High Country Store, carolers throughout the day, and other family activities. Info: 884-0147 or 481-4880.
- **Tri-Lakes Community Christmas Handbell Concert: Ring We Now of Christmas**, Sat., Dec. 4, 7 p.m., at the Monument Community Presbyterian Church, 238 Third St., Monument. Carols performed by youth and adult handbell choirs with keyboard and the Monument Hill Brass Quintet. Info: Betty Jenik, 488-3853.
- **Tri-Lakes Chamber, Grand Re-Opening**, Sat., Dec. 4, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. with the ribbon cutting at noon. Come see our newly remodeled offices which were the result of our "Extreme Makeover" and enjoy beer, wine, soda and hors d'oeuvres. Info: 481-3282
- **Annual Yule Log Pot Luck Dinner at Palmer Lake**, Tue., Dec. 7, 5 p.m. at Palmer Lake Town Hall. Bring a dish to share and come enjoy the festivities. Info: 481-0475.
- **Black Forest Chapter of AARP Potluck Luncheon**, Wed., Dec. 8, 11:30 a.m., Black Forest Community Church, Shoup and Black Forest Road. Normally meets the 2nd Wed. of each month. Info: Electa Beckner at 596-6787 or Chuck Eaton at 495-2443.
- **Ben Lomond Gun Club, Tri-Lakes Chapter**, Thu., Dec. 9, 7 p.m., Tri-Lakes Fire Station 1, 18650 Hwy 105 west of Monument near the bowling alley. Normally meets the 2nd Thu. each month. Info: 481-3364.
- **Tri-Lakes Networking Team Monthly Social & Dinner**, Thu., Dec. 9, 6:30-9 p.m., Woodmoor Country Club. Connect with women in business. Normally meets the 2nd Thu. each month. Info: Tonya Whaley, 484-0677; Rhonda Fullmer, 481-6352.
- **Annual Santa's Breakfast at Palmer Lake Elementary School**, Sat., Dec. 11, 11 a.m.. Info: 481-0475.
- **A Holiday Harp Recital**, Sat. Dec., 11, 2:30 p.m. at the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts, 304 Hwy. 105. This free recital will feature the students of Renee Quinn's Harp Studio along with a guest performance by concert harpist, Mari Honda. Info: 481-0111.
- **Annual Yule Log Hunt at Palmer Lake**, Sun., Dec. 12, 1 p.m. at Palmer Lake Town Hall. Hunt participants should arrive between 11 a.m. and noon. The winner will ride the Yule Log back to town and get the first cup of wassail. Those not participating in the hunt can help make wassail and enjoy an indoor program and activities. Info: 481-0475.
- **A Classical Christmas with the Denver Brass**, Sun., Dec. 12, 7:30 p.m. at Family of Christ Worship Center. The Denver Brass will be joined by string players from the Colorado Philharmonic as well as the Family of Christ

choir as they present an evening of Christmas music.

- **Tri-Lakes Music Association's Community Christmas Concert: Portraits of Christmas**, Fri., Dec. 10 and Sat., Dec. 11, 7 p.m., Sun., Dec. 12, 2 p.m. at Lewis-Palmer High School. The concert will feature the Tri-Lakes Community hand bell choir, the TLMA children's choir, adult choir, and orchestra. All proceeds benefit Tri-Lakes Cares. Info: www.trilakesmusic.org.
- **La Leche League of Tri-Lakes**, Tue., Dec. 14, 10 a.m., Family of Christ Lutheran Church. This worldwide organization provides mother-to-mother support for mothers who choose to breastfeed. 675 Baptist Rd. Normally meets the 2nd Tue. each month. Info: 481-2909.
- **Women's Business Owners and Managers Luncheon**, Tue., Dec. 14, 11:30 a.m., King's Deer Golf Club. RSVP and info: 481-3282.
- **Gleneagle Women's Club Christmas Tea**, Fri., Dec. 17, 1-3 p.m., Liberty Heights, 12105 Ambassador Dr., Colorado Springs. The program will feature Christmas songs by the Skylarks Please bring a non-perishable food item that will be donated to charity. Reservations required by Dec. 12: Cecelia Neill, 481-1283.
- **Tri-Lakes Women's Club Holiday Home Tour and Luncheon**, Fri., Dec. 17. Home tour for members, 9:30 a.m. Luncheon at Perry Park Country Club, noon. Reservations required; call Jackie Timura, 481-6923, or visit www.tlwc.net under Reservations. Membership is open to all interested women living in School District 38. Proceeds from fundraisers benefit local nonprofit groups. Information is available at www.tlwc.net or call Kay Wantman, 481-6240, or Paula Johnson, 481-9376.
- **Christmas Dance Performance: Christmas for All**, Fri., Dec. 17, 6:30 p.m. at Creekside Middle School. This free performance will feature the Marilyn Grahn dancers at 6:30 p.m., the Liberty Cloggers at 7 p.m. and Cindy's Dance Factory at 7:45 p.m.
- **Family of Christ Lutheran Church, Live Nativity**, Sat., Dec. 18, 4 p.m. and 7 p.m., Sun., Dec. 19, 8 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. Performances feature live re-enactments of the Christmas story, including live animals, even a camel, along with authentic costuming and fabulous music.
- **MOMS Club of Monument New Member Social**, no meeting in December. Come meet other stay-at-home moms and kids! Normally meets the Fri. before the last Wed. of the month. Info: Denise Bowe, 488-0552.
- **Palmer Divide Quiltmakers**, Thu., Jan. 6, 7 p.m., Church of Woodmoor, Furrow Rd. Normally meets the 1st Thu. each month. Info: 488-0074.
- **Monument Homemakers Club Monthly Potluck Lunch**, Thu., Jan. 6, 11:30 a.m., Monument Town Hall. Normally meets the 1st Thu. each month. Info: Kay Reuteler, 488-3263.

To have your event listed in Our Community Calendar, please contact John Heiser at 488-9031, our_community_calendar@hotmail.com or P.O. Box 1742, Monument, Colorado 80132.

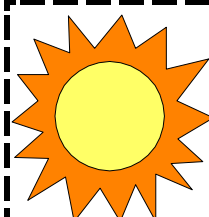
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- RV & trailer parking
- Mountain Views!

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Fabulous Homes & Acreages



SPLENDID FAMILY HOME ON 5.2 ACRES W/ TOWERING PINES AND MEADOW! This wonderful 2-story home offers 4 BDRMS, 3.5 BATHS and a 3 car Garage. The lrg. island kitchen, main level office, bay windows, cozy fireplace, huge master suite w/ jacuzzi tub & walk-in closet, sizeable deck & landscaping make this home a great value in Black Forest! BRAND NEW CARPET & EXTERIOR PAINT. Zoned for Horses. \$409,900



SPACIOUS RANCHER WITH SPLENDID FRONT RANGE VIEWS! This wonderful 5 BDRM, 3 BATH home w/ 3 car garage is nestled in lush scrub oak in Woodmoor. Extras include fresh paint, skylights, fin. walk-out Bsmt, open & sunny floor plan, deck & more! \$299,900

LAND!

TWO WOODED 5 ACRE LOTS, GREAT BUILDING SITES! Good walk-out potential on both lots! Located on a paved road w/ many expensive homes in the area! \$150,000 & \$145,000

GORGEIOUS 2.5 ACRE LOT WITH TREES AND PIKES PEAK VIEW. Backs to open space, trails & next to beautiful pond. In prestigious HIGH FOREST RANCH location. A gated community. \$319,900

ENCHANTING VIEWS AND DELIGHTFULLY PRIVATE SETTING NEXT TO ACRES OF OPEN SPACE! This graceful yet inviting and comfortable home offers 5 BDRMS, office, 4 BATHS & a large 3 car Garage. Some of the many extras include a main level BDRM and office with a full BATH, soaring ceilings, a large deck w/ views of the sparkling city lights, island kitchen, stucco and tile exterior, 5 piece master bath, and lush landscaping. \$475,000



CONTEMPORARY COUNTRY CHARM ON ALMOST 20 ACRES IN BLACK FOREST WITH AWESOME PIKES PEAK VIEWS! 6 BDRM, 4 BATH home w/ a 2 car garage built in year 2000 w/ over 4000 fin. sq ft. Spacious, bright home w/ 2 fireplaces, great kitchen w/ lrg. eating nook, deck, covered front porch & fin. walk-out Bsmt. \$489,900



GORGEIOUS NEWER RANCHER ON 5 ACRES WITH RV AND BOAT PARKING! Fantastic open floor plan w/ lots of style & upgraded features. This 5 BDRM, 3 BATH home has an oversized 3 car Garage & lrg. covered deck. Extras include cherry cabinets, granite, tile, stone gas log fireplace, "trex" decking, media room, huge wet bar, fin. walk-out Bsmt, stucco ext. Volume ceilings, great lighting, & much more! A must see! \$449,900

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