



# The Bent Tree Log

The Bent Tree Property Owners' Association Newsletter

July 2000

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## Emergency Response

by Jes Raintree

This issue was brought up last fall at the Annual Property Owners Meeting. This article describes an opportunity for better emergency response at lower cost for Bent Tree homeowners.

### Our Current Fire/Emergency Service

Bent Tree is currently served by the Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District (FPD), located west of I-25 on Highway 105. Tri-Lakes FPD is a volunteer fire department with six full-time employees that rotate. Trained community members respond to a page, report to the station, obtain the equipment, and head to the location of the call.

### The Effect of High Insurance Classifications on Your Homeowners Insurance Premiums

Our current Insurance Services Organization (ISO) rating is 9 on a scale of 10, 10 being the worst. The ISO rating is based on the type of fire protection your home has. Location of water, amount of water, location of fire department, number of staff, equipment, dependence on volunteers, etc. determine your ISO rating. The ISO rating also has a direct impact on your insurance payments. Generally, the higher the rating, the higher the insurance cost.

For example, our Bent Tree III home is rated at Level 9 due to dependence on volunteers, lack of hydrants, and the distance from the station to our home. We could realize savings of \$439.70 annually if we were reclassified at a Level 6. If identified as a Level 4, we would save \$732.82.

The primary concern is obtaining the best possible emergency and fire protection for our families and property. A full-time fire department coupled with all types of emergency equipment would provide that. A

another benefit would be the lower insurance cost likely to be seen by most homeowners.

### How Do We Increase Emergency Coverage and Lower Insurance Cost?

There are two potential solutions: consolidation of FPDs or inclusion within a different FPD.

**Consolidation:** This solution would combine local fire protection districts (Tri-Lakes, Woodmoor, and perhaps Palmer Lake) their equipment and personnel. This would mean that the Woodmoor-Monument station, which is closer to Bent Tree, would have primary responsibility for responding to our calls. Woodmoor-Monument station is manned seven days a week 24 hours per day with fully paid professional fire fighters, Emergency Medical Technicians, and paramedics.



A combined Woodmoor-Monument, Tri-Lakes, and Palmer Lake FPD would have a full range of equipment and full-time, trained personnel. This plan would take our home from an ISO Level 9 to an ISO Level 4.

The board of one of the districts must initiate a consolidation resolution. The boards of each of the other districts then concur or reject the consolidation resolution. If the boards of two or more districts wish to consolidate, a ballot measure is submitted to the voters in each of those districts. If the ballot measure passes, the districts are consolidated.

**Inclusion:** This solution requires two steps. First excluding ourselves from the Tri-Lakes FPD and then including ourselves in the Woodmoor-Monument FPD. Woodmoor-Monument FPD would be our first line of response with personnel and equipment they currently have in place. The drawback to this plan is that it would not include direct access to Tri-Lakes FPD equipment (e.g., an ambulance). This plan would take our home from an ISO Level 9 to an ISO Level 6.

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## Emergency Response

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Petitions would be filed seeking exclusion from Tri-Lakes FPD and inclusion in Woodmoor-Monument FPD. If the mil levy in Woodmoor-Monument FPD is higher than the Tri-Lakes FPD, approval by the voters in the area seeking the change would be required. Approval by the Woodmoor-Monument FPD board would also be required.

### What's Next?

As Colorado continues to grow, consolidations are occurring throughout the state. It is the more "popular" and beneficial solution in terms of equipment and expertise of personnel. However, this issue has proven to be territorial and somewhat emotional for our fire districts. There are also tax levies to be considered and debts of fire districts included in the consolidation. Tri-Lakes has debt for their new building; Woodmoor-Monument is debt free. At first glance, the ISO savings outweigh the difference in levies.

We are asking you to evaluate this issue in terms of improved safety and lower cost for you as a homeowner. We seek your input. Does this issue concern you? Should Bent Tree pursue it further? Feel free to contact Jes Raintree, Task Force Lead (488-8300) or Ron Britt, Bent Tree Property Owners Association President (481-0860).

## Fire Risk

*Adapted from the Bent Tree Forest Stewardship Management Plan (pages 16 and 17)*

Fire is a natural process associated with grasslands and ponderosa pine forests. Fires occur in various intensities, durations and frequencies. Fires range from cool surface fires of long or short duration to hot crown fires which may also be of long or short duration.

The frequency, intensity, or duration of surface or crown fires in Black Forest is not known for certain, but research in other areas of the Front Range suggests that surface fires which thinned regenerating ponderosa pine trees occurred in 40-80 year intervals. Naturally occurring destructive crown fires were very infrequent. The possibility of destructive crown fires is much greater

now because of the change in forest structure to crowded closed canopy stands with many small trees and dead branches acting as ladder fuels.

Lightning (May to September), is the only natural ignition source for fire. Summer lightning in Black Forest is usually accompanied by rain, so dry lightning fires, while not impossible, are less likely here than in ponderosa pine forests farther north in Wyoming, Montana, Idaho or the Black Hills of South Dakota.

Human-caused ignitions can happen any time of the year. If ignition occurs during windy weather (especially November through February when snow is absent) there is potential for severe crown fire spread. Dry, windy spring weather can create dangerous conditions. Consider the May 18, 1996 fire on Buffalo Creek, Pike National Forest, caused by a campfire on a windy day.

Cool, surface fires have been rapidly suppressed in Black Forest for over 50 years, which has prevented some of the natural thinning of tree regeneration from fire. Where overstory and understory trees have been thinned, and de-



fensible space has been created around dwellings, a cool surface fire poses little threat and creates only short-term nuisance from smoke, charcoal, and a temporary setback to vegetation growth.

The risk of crown fire spread to Bent Tree is greatest along the western border of the subdivision near the Palmer Divide Ridge, where adjacent subdivisions downhill and downwind to the west and southwest have not been thinned. To the south, Higby Road affords little protection as a fuelbreak because of the large area of dense forest downhill and downwind. Since prevailing winds in summer are from the south, southeast, and southwest, this area is a potential fire spread danger zone.

Potential fire spread is greatest uphill and with wind. Patchier forest/meadow areas to the north of Bent Tree and the Highway 105 right-of-way affords some minimal protection from crown fires spreading from the north where there is also a high probability of seasonal strong wind. There is a modest area of thick forests immediately to the east across Roller Coaster Road, but the proximity of open meadow in the broad expanse of Cherry Creek Valley and the rarity of easterly winds suggests that fire-spread from this direction is least likely.

## Cisterns

by John Heiser, Editor

In the lead article in this issue, Jes Raintree describes two approaches, consolidation and inclusion, to improve emergency response and reduce homeowners insurance costs. Another thing we can do is to install cisterns, underground water storage tanks, as a water supply for firefighting. This would greatly improve the situation regardless of any other changes we make.

I spoke with Dave Youtsey, Chief of the Woodmoor-Monument FPD, and Rob Denbosci, Assistant Chief of the Tri-Lakes FPD. They stressed that one of the greatest problems in our area is the lack of readily available water for fire-fighting. There is a well at the equipment shed at Highway 105 and Roller Coaster but it delivers only 93 gallons per minute.

Both men cited the Urban-Wildland Interface Fire Code that advocates use of cisterns in areas like ours that lack a central water system and hydrants.

It is recommended that 10,000 gallon cisterns be buried at the edge of the right-of-way about every half-mile. These cisterns are approximately 10' x 10' x 40'. Smaller cisterns placed closer together are a possible alternative.

It is crucial that we immediately launch an effort to install cisterns throughout Bent Tree. I am gathering information on the most cost effective way to accomplish this. If you are interested in helping this important effort, please call me at 488-9031.

## Forest Committee Corner

by Ron Britt, Forest Committee Chair

### Beetle Survey Results

The results of the survey for the presence of mountain pine beetle infected trees indicates that there is no evidence of any current infestations in our community. We received about twenty-two percent of the two hundred and fifty or so cards sent to home-owners last August. The inspections reported by homeowners represented a fairly good checkerboard cross section of Bent Tree and therefore we conclude that there is currently no significant mountain pine beetle infestation

in our community. However, it is requested that property owners that have not recently inspected their trees please do so or request assistance. The key to preventing a widespread infestation is to remove individual infected trees before beetle larvae mature in mid-summer.

### Noxious Weed Control

We plan to spray herbicide for noxious weed control again this spring. Any homeowner that has a significant noxious weed population on their property and would like to have them treated with herbicide, please contact Ron Britt at 481-0860.

As a reminder, the best way to control noxious weeds on your property is to physically remove them, roots and all, early in the spring or after a good rain while the soil is soft. It is important that the roots be removed otherwise some of the weeds will sprout from any residual roots left in the soil. The next best approach is to keep them mowed, particularly before they go to seed. This will stunt their growth as well as preventing the disbursement of seeds in late summer and fall.

## Tri-Lakes Area News

by John Heiser, Editor

The past eight months have seen many changes in the political climate in the Town of Monument.

Last November, I joined with a dozen or so residents of Monument and Wakonda Hills in opposing two concrete batch plants proposed to be built on North Washington Street in Monument just off Highway 105, not far from the Safeway store. Our group soon attracted members from many communities in the Tri-Lakes area including Colorado Estates, Kingsdeer, Red Rocks Ranch, and Woodmoor. We named our group the Coalition of Tri-Lakes Communities.

At the time, it was widely reported that then Monument Mayor Si Sibel was telling people the concrete plants were a "done deal".

On November 17th, the Monument Planning Commission held a hearing on the Transit Mix application, the first of the two proposed plants. The application was approved with only one dissenting vote.

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## Tri-Lakes Area News

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After a variety of delays, a hearing was held February 28th by the Monument Board of Trustees (i.e., town council). By then, the Coalition had attracted more than 100 families. We worked hard to notify area residents. The hearing was attended by more than 300 people. About 35 people provided public input. All but two were opposed to the project. Most of those who spoke against the project were members of the Coalition. Issues raised included traffic hazards and congestion, water usage, and environmental pollution.

By a vote of 3 to 4, a motion to approve the Transit Mix application was narrowly defeated. The meeting was adjourned before a motion to deny the application was made so a motion to deny was approved 4 to 3 on April 3rd. A suit brought by Transit Mix and the property owner has been filed in District Court. The Coalition's attorney feels that the Town was justified in its actions and the suit will not succeed.

Trans-Colorado Concrete (TCC) applied to build a concrete batch plant adjacent to the proposed Transit Mix plant. The proposed TCC plant is roughly twice as large as the proposed Transit Mix plant. The TCC proposal will likely be heard in July or August.

Largely through efforts of the Coalition, the Monument election April 4th resulted in significant changes. The Mayor and the two Trustees who had voted to approve the Transit Mix plant were replaced. At the first meeting of the new Mayor and Board, they passed a 90 day moratorium on approval of new developments. This was needed to give the Town time to address shortcomings in its development review process.

A home rule ballot measure was also approved April 3rd. The voters agreed with the Coalition's recommendations in electing members for the Home Rule Charter Commission. The Commission has made excellent progress toward completing a Charter for the Town. The Charter will be reviewed by the Board in August and voted on by the Town in September. Having a Charter will give the Town considerably more flexibility.

A major project on the horizon is the Supercenter Wal\*Mart proposed to be built on a 30 acre parcel on the south side of Baptist Road across from King Soopers.

This would be a 184,000 square foot store with parking for more than 900 cars. Issues with this project include traffic hazards and congestion, drainage, erosion, loss of downtown businesses, and damage to the Jackson Creek wetlands near the site. Hearings on the Wal\*Mart application and a whole host of other projects are expected to start in mid-July when the moratorium ends.

The Coalition is working hard to collect and disseminate information on these and a variety of other projects including qualifying the Coloradans for Responsible Growth Initiative for the November ballot and helping update Monument's Comprehensive Plan. For more information on these and other topics, visit the Coalition's web site at [www.CoalitionTLC.org](http://www.CoalitionTLC.org) or call me at 488-9031.

## Annual Meeting

**The Bent Tree Property Owners Association Annual Meeting will be held Sunday, October 22nd.** Two additional Board members will be elected this fall. This action is being taken in anticipation of the reduced involvement of Bob Moore and Ken Barber since Bent Tree IV and V are completed. Anyone interested in becoming a Board member should contact Ron Britt (481-0860) or any of the other members of the Board.

## Neighborhood Notes

- **Road Paving Update:** The Bent Tree Board contacted the El Paso County Department of Transportation regarding paving our roads. The County said they do not plan to do any paving in Bent Tree. The Board is preparing a formal letter to El Paso County requesting provision be made in their future budgets to complete paving in our development. In the meantime, if residents pay for chip and seal paving, the County will assume responsibility for maintenance. This has been done on Viscount Court and elsewhere in Bent Tree. For details, contact Ron Britt at 481-0860.
- **Birdhouses:** The Welcoming Committee is looking for someone to make birdhouses. The Committee gives birdhouses to new families in Bent Tree. We normally purchase 20 to 30 per year. Our feathered friends need a home and we would like our new neighbors to have a gift. If you are interested in making birdhouses, please call Susan Kilgore at 481-1154.

*If you have questions or comments regarding this newsletter please contact John Heiser, Editor, (719) 488-9031, Fax (719) 488-3455, [j.heiser@ieee.org](mailto:j.heiser@ieee.org).  
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