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Well, we're back! Did You Miss Us?

Yes, after a short missing-e-mail-induced respite, the Metro District newsletter is back in full force. What caused the absence? When the Metro District shifted all management responsibilities to WSDM – District Managers as of January 1, 2023, the Metro District Board no longer had access to resident e-mail addresses as the community e-mail list is maintained by the HOA and Warren Management. Because residents had not given permission to the HOA to release their e-mail addresses to the Metro, the Metro has had to generate an entirely new e-mail list for the distribution of any Metro news, announcements and the newsletter. **If you haven't signed up for the Metro e-mail list and want to be kept abreast of current community happenings, please sign up via the Cathedral Pines website at:**

[E-mail Sign-up | Cathedral Pines MD \(colorado.gov\)](https://www.colorado.gov/e-mail-sign-up-cathedral-pines-md)

The e-mail issue aside, the Metro Board had a very active first quarter as it has been addressing a variety of actions to be implemented later this year as well as holding its annual Community Annual Meeting. We also have Metro Board elections in early May with 2 of the 5 seats open. So check things out below...it's a busy start to 2023 with lots of things going on in your community!

****If you did not miss this newsletter, ignore this one***



Winter Wonder Land in Cathedral Pines Black Forest

2 Metro Board Seats Open in May Election

Several years ago, the Colorado legislature passed a plan to have a more orderly transition in Metro Board management so Directors' terms were staggered over years rather than expiring all at once. This effort started in 2021 when terms were adjusted on a one-time basis; the last steps will be taken this year when two Metro Board seats will be up for election to 4-yr. terms.

The election will be conducted via mail-in ballot by El Paso County. The Board has hired Teak Simonton, a Designated Election Official (DEO) who will independently oversee the election process on behalf of the community.

Mail ballots will be sent to all registered voters in the Cathedral Pines Metro District beginning April 10th. The voter registration list will include all "active" and "inactive" registered electors within the district. Ballots are only automatically mailed to those electors who are "active". Any "inactive" elector must request a ballot from the DEO: Teak.Simonton@gmail.com. **Completed ballots MUST be received no later than 7 p.m. on Tuesday, May 2 (excluding UOCAVA voters).** Any ballots not received by the DEO at this time will not be counted or included in the results. Because our electorate is small the election results should be available that evening, but technically the DEO has until May 19 to officially certify the results.

Ballots may be Mailed to: PO BOX 1479, Colorado Springs, CO 80901

- or -

Dropped off at either below location:

Monday – Friday 8:00am – 5:00pm
WSDM's Office
614 N Tejon St
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

ONLY May 2, 2023, from 7:00am – 7:00pm
The Lodge at Cathedral Pines
13977 Milam Rd
Colorado Springs, CO 80908

The following are the candidates who have filed for the elections, listed in the order they will appear on the ballot based upon a previously-held lottery:

4-year term (Vote for two)

Kristin Jones
Kevin Combs
Bill Kappel
Bill Heeter*



*Denotes current Board members running for re-election

Profiles of each candidate authored by the candidates themselves are available on the Cathedral Pines website (<https://cathedralpinesmd.colorado.gov/elections-0>)

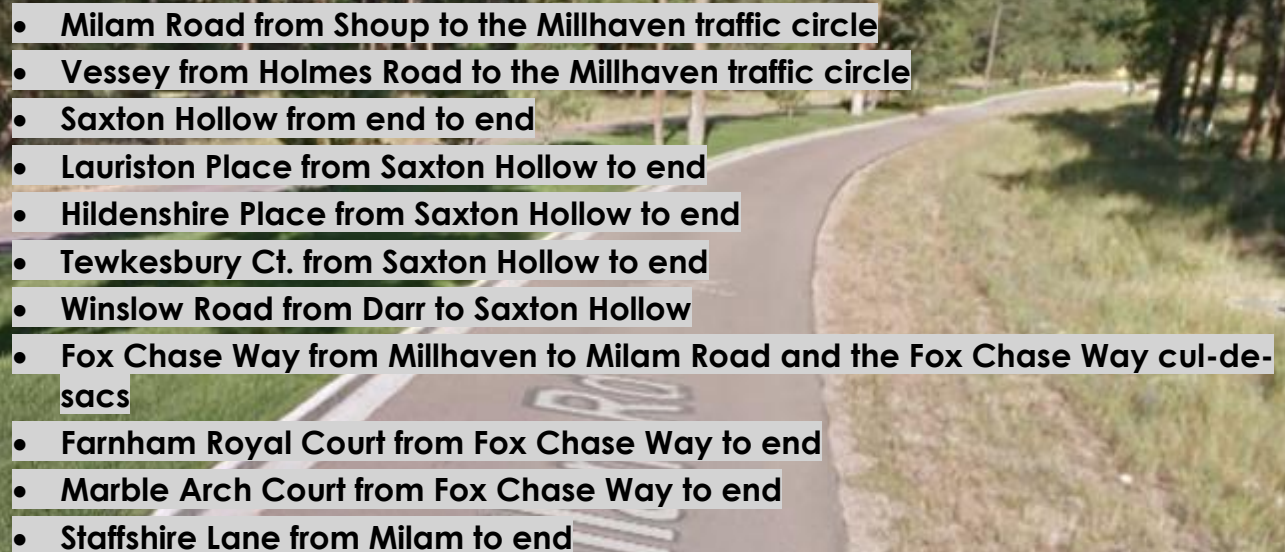
In order to assure transparency and objectivity, all biographies were vetted by WSDM - District Managers and released for publication by the same.

Big Changes Coming to Cathedral Pines Roads in 2023!

We have all seen the roads in our community deteriorate over the last few years, and despite the temporary crack sealing efforts undertaken by El Paso County last summer the roads in Cathedral Pines still have not held up well over the winter. There are potholes in the roads, big washouts in the ditches, and many cracks that have re-emerged. Despite our best efforts to request temporary fixes using the County's CitizenConnect website, our road conditions remain at best disappointing. Well, that's the bad news—the good news is that the El Paso County Department of Public Works has scheduled all of the roads in Cathedral Pines to be chip sealed this year!

What is chip sealing? Chip sealing is often used on lower-traffic asphalt roads and highways that have started to deteriorate but do not currently warrant full repaving. The process of chip sealing involves grinding down and leveling the paved surface, applying a layer of asphalt emulsion to the surface of the road, then spreading a layer of aggregate stone over the top of the emulsion. A roller is then used to press the aggregate into the emulsion. The benefits of chip sealing include extended pavement life, improved traction, better appearance, and reduced noise. Chip sealing is a cost-effective alternative to repaving, is less disruptive to traffic and can be completed in a shorter time frame.

According to the County, the following community roads are scheduled to be chip sealed this summer:

- 
- **Milam Road from Shoup to the Millhaven traffic circle**
 - **Vessey from Holmes Road to the Millhaven traffic circle**
 - **Saxton Hollow from end to end**
 - **Lauriston Place from Saxton Hollow to end**
 - **Hildenshire Place from Saxton Hollow to end**
 - **Tewkesbury Ct. from Saxton Hollow to end**
 - **Winslow Road from Darr to Saxton Hollow**
 - **Fox Chase Way from Millhaven to Milam Road and the Fox Chase Way cul-de-sacs**
 - **Farnham Royal Court from Fox Chase Way to end**
 - **Marble Arch Court from Fox Chase Way to end**
 - **Staffshire Lane from Milam to end**

No specific timetable has been set for the work and the schedule is subject to change. However, the contractor who typically does this work for the County usually starts work in June, so we can expect to see those trucks and some disruption of traffic on Milam while the work is being done this summer. But if you have driven south on Milam towards Union St. recently you can see the much-improved condition of the road after last summer's chip sealing work there.

So hang in there—the rattle-rattle-boom-boom-boom of driving in Cathedral Pines should improve dramatically this summer!

Landscaping Update

According to State Law, one of the primary charges of the Metro District Board is to manage the landscaping of the community. Our Developers never developed a long-term “vision” of what the community should look like as it matures. When they turned over management of the community to our residents in 2018, there was no plan for continuing to invest in the community’s landscaping, environment or aesthetics. As a consequence, our landscaping has been in “maintenance mode” for several years. Therefore, in 2022 the Board undertook the project of surveying our residents to measure their expectations in terms of what they would like Cathedral Pines to look like as we move forward. Based upon the feedback of the majority of the residents who responded, a long-term plan would address our community’s aesthetics including ponds, trees, shrubs, roadways, pathways, parks, trails, picnic areas and green space.

In other words, how did we want our community to look in 5-10-20 years?

In late 2021 the Metro Board hired a professional, national landscaping design firm (Kimley-Horn) to assist the Board in determining the best strategy to improve our irrigation system as well as to develop a long-term landscaping plan for the community. Kimley-Horn’s recommendations were then presented at our 2022 annual meeting and subsequently voted upon by our residents in last Spring’s survey. In that survey our residents overwhelmingly chose a hybrid approach to our landscaping, with focal points in our community planted with grass, new shrubs, and deciduous trees while other less visible areas will have a more xeric approach. Xeric landscaping includes the use of stones, boulders, and mulch in place of grass, thus reducing our water requirements.

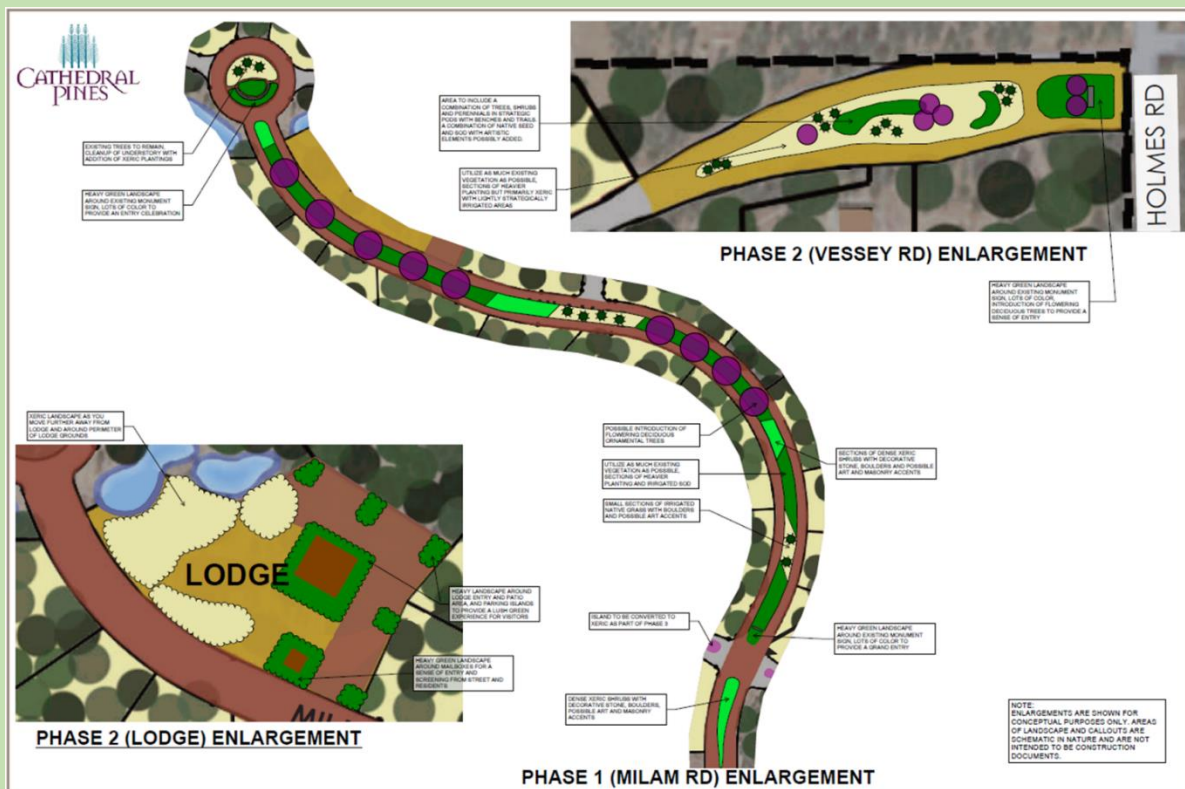
The First Phase of the plan is to address the Milam Road median, specifically the condition of the turf and breakdowns in our irrigation system. As you may recall, our irrigation system has had so many problems that the section running down Saxton Hollow had to be completely shut off last year due to numerous leaks. The system is 20 years old and has so many flaws that it was judged to be irreparable, so in order to implement the hybrid approach on Milam it needs to be replaced.

The scope of the irrigation system replacement is significant—the existing irrigation system will be abandoned, turf all along the Milam median will be removed, new irrigation lines will be laid, and a completely new watering system will be installed by 101 Landscaping. The system will include new state-of-the-art sprinkler controls and heads, which are much more water-efficient and flexible. It can adjust for changes in precipitation, humidity, wind direction and speed, etc. when watering, and is centrally programmable for ease of maintenance. In short, it will be much more water-efficient and better suited for the plantings going forward.

Kimley-Horn will be presenting a more detailed landscaping plan at the April Metro District Board meeting (to be held on Monday, April 10 at 10:00 a.m. at the Lodge), focusing specifically on Phase I—the Milam entrance. This will include detailed plans for the existing trees on Milam (which will be preserved); new plantings of native shrubs and annuals that are more suited to our climate, add more color and have lesser water requirements; and replacing the existing Kentucky bluegrass with fescue sod and seed, which is much better suited for our environment.

Because of the comprehensive scope of this project, \$225,000 has been set aside in this year’s Metro budget to cover its cost. This includes all of the tear out and removal of existing grass and shrubs, design and installation of the new system, and various new plantings on Milam Road. If the community chooses to move forward on Phases II and III of the long-term landscaping project, additional funds will need to be set aside from the operating budget in future years.

If you would like to review last year’s survey results, they are available in the March 2022 Annual Meeting Power Point which is available online at the Cathedral Pines Metro Board website under 2022 Board Meeting Packets (<https://cathedralpinesmd.colorado.gov>). Also, the current landscaping status is discussed at every CP Metro Board meeting and updated in the monthly community newsletter.



Did You Miss Our Annual Meeting?

While the Metro District is not required by law to have an annual meeting, it is required to submit an annual budget to the State which was presented and approved in November. However, the Metro Board believes a community-wide meeting is an effective way to engage our residents, review the Board's accomplishments from the prior year, review our operating budget, solicit feedback on priorities, and better understand concerns of our residents.

This year's meeting was held the evening of February 21 with approx. 40 residents attending. Bill Heeter, the Metro Board President, presented a recap of the Board's 2022 accomplishments, last year's financial performance, 2023 objectives, and our planned 2023 spending. For an in-depth review a copy of that PowerPoint presentation is available on the Cathedral Pines website. However, to the right is a summary of the Board's 2023 goals:

Visit the website to view the Annual Meeting Power Point Presentation:
<https://cathedralpinesmd.colorado.gov/board-meeting-agenda-packets>
(go to February 2023 Packets)

2023 Board Goals:

Landscaping:

- Implement first phase of long-term landscaping plan
- Replace shrubs on Milam with native, less water-dependent varieties
- Develop roadside seedling mitigation program
- Continue semi-annual chipping program
- Develop mistletoe abatement program
- Assume management of all three entrance monuments from HOA
-

Trails:

- Erosion Repair South of Millhaven
- Erosion & Weather Maintenance
- Remove Cattails from North Water Feature
- Repair Lower Milam Pond liner
- Remove dead trees near barn

Lodge:

- New Lodge Management Plan
- Expand Marketing Plan (Business/ Retreats)
- Complete installation of New audio system
- Install season decorations in coordination with HOA

Flying Horse Development:

- Continue to advocate for average 2.5 acre/ lot density
- Responsible use of water resources
- Adequate traffic controls
- Continue monitoring the Estates at Cathedral Pines Development

Financial:

- Improve Financial performance of Lodge
- Explore Grants
- Maintain Mill Levy for 2023
- Fully fund irrigation system replacement out of operating funds
- Manage Capital Spending plan
- Collect outstanding FEMA funds (+/- \$50,000)
- Continue to strengthen Contingency and Reserve funds

More Management Changes Happening at the Lodge



The management of our community Lodge will be undergoing another change as VenQ, the management company hired in early 2022 to run the Lodge on behalf of the community, resigned earlier this year. VenQ struggled to generate the bookings we expected and was never successful in building a non-wedding-related business, which remains one of the major objectives of the Metro Board.

The Lodge has underperformed financially since COVID reduced rentals by 75%. The Metro Board was optimistic that VenQ could significantly improve rentals but they never materialized, and both parties agreed not to renew its operating agreement in 2023.

The Board has struggled to find the appropriate management company and marketing approach to better utilize the facility, leading to disappointing financial performance the last two years. The Lodge continues to be well utilized by our community but outside rentals, which generate a significant income for the Metro budget, have fallen and not recovered since COVID. When the management position was open last year a number of parties were interviewed, but VenQ stood out as the best alternative with previous facilities management experience at Flying Horse among its strengths. However, without a significant marketing budget to improve awareness of the facility (which declined during COVID) and increased competition, Lodge rentals have never rebounded to pre-COVID levels.

Therefore, in March the Metro Board made the decision to change the management structure of the Lodge, dividing the operating side of the business from the marketing efforts. The Board has hired Shalece Buchholz as an independent consultant to handle facility tours, oversee event rentals and otherwise manage the building and operations. At the same time, the Board has engaged a professional marketing firm, TWM, LLC., to handle the marketing and social media efforts of the Lodge. Travis Mark, the owner of TWM, will oversee a much more comprehensive marketing effort including developing a new website, search engine optimization, blogging, social media marketing, e-mail marketing, online advertising, and reputation management to reach and engage potential customers.

Ms. Buchholz and TWM have been engaged on a 6-month trial basis to implement this approach, but significant improvement in bookings etc. will likely not be seen until 2024, as bridal and similar bookings tend to happen a year in advance. The new marketing efforts will be implemented this spring and summer, hopefully in time to generate holiday rentals to the business community.

In the meantime, the Lodge remains open for rentals to community members for your next event or gathering for merely \$250 and includes:

- 8 hours of use
- use tables and chairs
- use of onsite suites and kitchen
- use of all 11 acres surrounding the Lodge
- Use of AV sound system and TVs

In order to book the Lodge, please contact Shalece Buchholz atthecplodge@gmail.com

Major Contract Negotiation Schedule

The Cathedral Pines Metro District Board deals with a variety of resources and contractors from those providing minor repairs or services within the community (Lodge HVAC, appliance maintenance, snow plowing, monument maintenance, etc.) to several major contracts that are typically renegotiated on a periodic basis to assure the rates and services we are receiving meet competitive prices and our expectations. Currently there are four services that fall within this “major” category (defined by the Board as any ongoing services contract exceeding \$20,000): District Management, Community Management, Landscaping and Snowplowing, and Lodge Management.

Although each of these major contracts are typically negotiated to cover a 3-yr. period, each is subject to annual renewal and funding by the Metro Board in accordance with Colorado State Law. (In short, if the Metro Board were dissatisfied with a particular vendor and the concerns could not be resolved, the Metro Board could opt to “defund” the contract for the following year, thus terminating it.)

Soliciting proposals for these major contracts is an extremely time consuming process. It requires developing and refining a “Request For Proposal” (RFP) which defines the services sought and terms of the agreement, including compensation, legal liability, etc.; vetting of the proposed RFP and contract by our legal counsel; distributing the RFP to the appropriate service providers seeking bids; vetting any bids received; addressing any questions/concerns that arise regarding the RFP; conducting a multi-stage interviewing process with selected finalists; and presentation to the Board for its final decision. All of this work is done by 1-2 volunteer Board members—a very time-consuming task in addition to their regular Board responsibilities.

Because of the amount of effort required to develop these RFPs, solicit resources throughout the community, and screen/interview all applicants, the Metro District Board made the decision to manage this process on a 3-yr. rotating basis, meaning one major contract will be solicited in the first quarter of each year (with landscaping rotating perhaps more frequently), as follows:

<u>Contract</u>	<u>RFP Submitted</u>	<u>Contract Start Date</u>	<u>Awarded To</u>
Landscaping/ Snow Removal	2021	1/1/2022	A Cut Above Landscape
Property Management	2022	1/1/2023	WSDM – District Managers
Lodge Management	2023	3/1/2023	Buchholz/ TWM, LLC
District Management	2024	1/1/2025	TBD

Of course, should any vendor not perform according to the agreement or violate any terms thereof, the Metro Board may choose to terminate the agreement and seek a replacement prior to the schedule shown above.

This new timetable will assure that all major contracts are reviewed on a regular basis yet assists the Board with managing its workload.

As a reminder...all Cathedral Pines Metro District Board meetings are open to the public, so please join us! The Board typically meets the second Monday of each month at 10:00 a.m. in the community Lodge. To receive email notifications of the Metro Board meetings sign up at:

E-mail Sign-up click here: <https://cathedralpinesmd.colorado.gov/e-mail-sign-up>

All residents are welcome. If you cannot attend in person, meetings are accessible virtually via Zoom. If you would like to speak to the Board at a meeting, you can contact Rebecca Harris at WSDM - District Managers rebecca.h@wsdistricts.co to schedule time, and there is always a period allotted at the end of each meeting for Homeowner feedback. Homeowners are asked to kindly abide by the 5-minute maximum speaking time.

This Place is a Mess!



If you are one of those individuals who regularly uses the Vessey/Holmes Road entrance/exit from Cathedral Pines, you have seen the dead trees, bushes and misc. materials slowly accumulate next to the community storage shed. The storage shed is the yellow aluminum building on the south side of Vessey set back from the road. It used to be used to store our landscaping equipment, but since that is now outsourced, we are renting out the facility to our landscaping company. Remnants of the Black Forest forest fire still abound there as there has never been a concerted clean-up of the area. Well, that is about to change.

Your Metro Board is organizing a Community Clean-up Morning on the storage shed grounds, tentatively scheduled for Saturday, May 13 from 9 a.m.-12 p.m. We are looking for resident volunteers to bring their clippers, shears, chain saws, and other landscaping tools and join us in cleaning up the area.

The plan is to thin out the brush, remove the dead trees, and stack the slash for pick-up the week of May 22 when the community Chipping Event will be held. The Metro Board will provide trash bags, water, and misc. tools for the volunteers.

Please mark your calendar to help! Not only do you help make a positive impact on our community, but you may meet some new friends and neighbors in the process. These events are always fun for the attendees and don't require a big time commitment—so please plan to join us. The more the merrier!

This is NOT the Time to Play “Hide and Seek” with Your Home

Here is (what should be) a very simple question: “How easily could emergency vehicles find your house?” Every resident in Cathedral Pines has a monument at the foot of their driveway with their street address on it—but how visible is it in the dark? All monument addresses are required to be lit at night, but if one were to drive around the neighborhood you can see many that, for one reason or another, are not. Fire trucks, sheriff patrols, and ambulances need to be able to see clearly which house is yours, no matter what time of day. Wandering around in the dark takes precious minutes away while your emergency gets worse.

Please be sure to occasionally check your monument lights at night. Batteries tend not to operate as well in the cold, and other critters sure like to sharpen their teeth on those electric cables. Addresses that are not lit are not only a safety issue, but violate CP covenants and are subject to a write-up and fine.

Thanks to Terry Stokka of Friends of Black Forest for this information



...or at least will be shortly. Yes, assuming Mother Nature eventually relents and allows spring to enter Colorado, it is almost time to be restocking our community ponds with fish.

After several years of a healthy winter survival and a minimal amount of new stocking required, last year we saw a harsh winter and low ponds levels negatively affect the fish population. Unfortunately, pond levels were so low in 2022 due to minimal rainfall and problems with our irrigation system refilling them that we missed the window to successfully transplant fish. However, arrangements have already been made this year to repopulate the ponds for recreational (catch and release) fishing. In addition to the carryover population of bass, bluegill, and grass carp (to help keep the ponds clean), we will be stocking approx. 300 more Bluegill Sunfish and 300 Yellow Perch sometime in May.

Just a reminder that anyone is allowed to fish the ponds from the shoreline, but no watercraft are allowed on them and fishing is strictly Catch and Release.

Let's All Chip In...with Chips!

The Metro Board has scheduled this year's Chipping Events to be held in May and September.



- **First chipping event is Monday, May 22 through Friday, May 26;** the second will be in late September (to be determined shortly). As a reminder, the first date will be for everyone to gather all of the deadfall that occurred over the winter, as well as get rid of any dead trees on your property. That is not a time for pruning or removal of live trees as that would attract pine beetles; fall is much better for that.
- Remember too that piles of slash should be placed along the roadside in piles no larger than 5 ft. x 5 ft. x 5 ft. They can be stacked there the week before pickup.
- Be sure to register for this service with Rebecca Harris at WSDM -District Management rebecca.h@wsdistricts.co . Because the chippers are booked throughout the summer, we cannot make last-minute additions to homes requesting the service that would delay their work in other communities.

Yours, Mine or Ours? Nope, mostly theirs

Who has the primary responsibility for plowing snow in our neighborhood? It is with the El Paso County Roads Maintenance Department. However, because we are a lower priority than other major arterials, often the County trucks cannot get to our community until 24-48 hours after a significant snowfall. Therefore, for the last several years the Metro District Board has engaged a third party to give our streets a preliminary plowing to allow emergency vehicles and others access through the neighborhood before the County gets here. The Metro District spends approx. \$20,000/yr. (based upon an average year's snowfall) to have a contractor make one single pass through the neighborhood—that is a single pass, not a thorough plowing—but enough to allow vehicles to drive through to Milam, Holmes and Shoup Roads. If there is a steady, slow-moving storm we may request a second plow through to keep roads open. But the primary responsibility is still with the County—another service provided by our tax payments. So if you have particular concerns about the timeliness of our plowing please contact the County—they have the primary responsibility.

This program was put out for bid last year and the winning contractor was A Cut Above, our current landscaping company. Because many landscapers prefer joint contracts to landscape and plow, keeping their equipment and people employed all year, we will be requesting proposals for both services beginning next summer.

The Complicated City/County Mix

Do you realize all of the complicated interactions that exist between the city and county? One of the more interesting ones is that everyone lives in the “county.” City dwellers are county residents as well as city residents. We county residents only deal with county issues and pay county taxes but the folks within the city limits have to deal with county commissioners as well as the city council and pay taxes to both.

The county is divided into four quarters based on population with a fifth district that is a small area totally within the city limits. The fifth county commissioner represents only city dwellers unlike the rest who represent both city and “country” dwellers. District 1, Holly William’s district, starts at about Dublin and goes north to the county line. District 2 starts at about Academy Blvd and goes northeast all the way to Ramah. Since everyone in the city is also in the county, the more populous Briargate effectively elects the District 1 commissioner and the eastern part of the city effectively elects the District 2 commissioner.

After this, things get more complicated. I used to think it was wrong for city dwellers to also be part of the county but when I learned that they pay county as well as city taxes, I changed my mind and am thankful for all those city dwellers who help pay for county expenses. There is one small tax (mine was \$9 for the year) called the road and bridge tax where the county gets to keep all of it from county residents but half of the tax paid by the city dwellers goes back to the city.

Now we get to facilities. The city pays for the city court house but they only handle municipal issues like traffic tickets in the city, building codes, and other city issues. We all pay for the county court house that handles cases like felonies, lawsuits, and crimes. We all pay for the county jail (no city jail), register of deeds, DMV, county coroner and emergency management offices. We all pay for the Citizen’s Service Center that houses the assessor, clerk of court, treasurer, elections office, welfare office and job search office. We all pay for the library. The city pays for its own police force but we all pay for the county sheriff. Once again, thanks to the city taxpayers for helping to pay for our county sheriff.

Taxes for schools and fire departments are all based on their district boundaries so city/county does not come into play here.

Almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of our property tax bill goes to run the schools and pay off the bonds for building new schools. When a new development is proposed, the developer is required to either provide land for schools or pay fees to build those new schools. Either way, new development does not cover the cost for new schools so existing taxpayers must cover a significant part of the bill. The city council just enacted impact fees for new residential developments that they say will cover 70% of new school and fire department costs. However, the county commissioners did not permit fire departments to collect an impact fee for new developments so existing residents must finance the new stations.

Thanks to Terry Stokka of Friends of Black Forest for this information

Contact Information



Cathedral Pines Key Info

Metro District website: <https://cathedralpinesmd.colorado.gov/>

Cathedral Pines Metro District Board of Directors

Office	Name	Term Expires	Phone	Email
President	Bill Heeter	May 2023	920-205-5605	Bill.heeter@cathedralpineshoa.org
Vice President	Rick Stauch	May 2025	719-260-9236	Rick.stauch@cathedralpineshoa.org
Treasurer	Debbie Perry	May 2025		Debbie.perry@cathedralpineshoa.org
Secretary	Ecton Espenlaub	May 2025	719-822-0410	Ecton.espenlaub@cathedralpineshoa.org
Asst Secretary	Lynn Shepherd	May 2023	623-680-3442	Lynn.shepherd@cathedralpineshoa.org

The Metro District Management Team

Kevin Walker Office: 719-447-1777 or Kevin.w@wsdistricts.co
Rebecca Harris Office: 719-447-1777 or Rebecca.h@wsdistricts.co
Cell: 719-266-3189

Community Map



Trail Map

