The trail remains off limits to anyone without a military or Department of Defense badge after the Academy was named in Inspire magazine and other terrorist correspondence as a desirable target. The Academy is directed by the commander of the U.S. Northern Command to increase force protection.

The premise of the meeting was to brainstorm different ways the Academy could balance security while allowing public access. The Department of Defense ideas were:

• Create a trails watch group to patrol and report any unusual activity
• Signage with contact information for Academy Security
• Surveillance cameras along the trail

The trail was heavily damaged by the rains this year, with repairs costing an estimated $480,000. El Paso County is working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to determine funding opportunities for the repairs, which for safety reasons should need to be completed prior to potentially opening up to the public again. Talks will continue as the Academy and the county work together to reach an agreeable compromise. A compromise, however, would still need to be approved by the U.S. Northern Command. Future meetings open to the public may take place. Final decisions were not expected to come before next year.

Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO), Sept. 26

By Larry Oliver, NEPCO president

Bill Elder, El Paso County Sheriff, spoke about county law enforcement at the Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO) general membership meeting, held at the Monument Town Hall on Sept. 26.

Sheriff Elder began the presentation with a brief personal background. He grew up in Colorado Springs, attended Palmer High School, and for many years was a law enforcement officer in District 1 (the NEPCO area). He also worked in real estate as a homeowners association (HOA) manager, giving him experience in HOA matters.

Elder said that El Paso is the largest county in Colorado, covering 2,200 square miles (same as Rhode Island), with a population of 600,000. The county has the largest Sheriff’s Office in the state, employing about 820 total personnel. Of those, 525 are “sworn-in” personnel and 100 are patrol officers. The county also has a 1,600-bed jail, with about 1,500 inmates a day.

Within El Paso County, Elder identified District 1 and the Falcon area as two focus points for his office due to the high growth in these areas. However, he pointed out that District 1 is a low-crime area compared to most of the county, with one paired car assigned to the district full time. As crime rates in the county and traffic conditions worsen, the sheriff has designated five traffic motorcycles to cover the entire county.

The Crime Prevention section of the Sheriff’s Office works closely with Neighborhood Watch personnel. One person in the office is dedicated to Neighborhood Watch, and provides helpful information as it is received. Elder urged everyone to call the Sheriff’s Office if something catches their attention, and highly recommended setting up Neighborhood Watches in communities where none exist. To aid county residents, the Sheriff’s Office recently released a new smart phone app for receiving sheriff alerts, submitting tips, calling the office, etc. Download this app by searching for “El Paso County Sheriff’s Office.”

The sheriff discussed several safety tips to aid in crime prevention including:

Safety tips when on vacation away from your home:
• Have a neighbor collect newspapers and mail or stop delivery.
• Tell your Neighborhood Watch director that you’ll be gone.
• Leave a key with a neighbor.
• Plant signs stating your house is alarmed (This is a big deterrent to crime).
• Treat the door from the garage into the house as an entry door, and lock it.
• Ask the Sheriff’s Office to do an occasional “vacation check” of your house.

Safety tips for cars:
• Keep classek boxes out of your car (check glove compartment).
• Put your proof of insurance and registration in your wallet or purse with your driver’s license, not in your glove compartment.

St. Shane Mitchell, who accompanied the sheriff, spoke about the Crime Reduction Unit that Sheriff Elder is in the process of organizing. Highlights include:

• The unit would have no assigned districts and would go where needed.
• Focus is on current crime areas.
• The unit would stay on a crime until it is solved.

Larry Oliver can be reached via editor@ocn.me.

Woodmoor Improvement Association Board of Directors, Oct. 28

Board hears update from No Methadone group, passes 2016 budget

By Jackie Burhans

At the Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) board meeting on Oct. 28, the board discussed the 2016 budget, heard a presentation from the No Methadone in Monument organization and announced the roll out of the new website design.

No Methadone in Monument

Tom Allen and Greg Coopman of the No Methadone in Monument (NMIM) group provided an update to the WIA board. Allen provided background information about the proposed Methadone Clinic and his involvement in forming the group to fight against it opening at 192 Front Street next to Limbach Park. He told the board that this impacts each and every one of us and could affect your property value from 17 to 22 percent. He indicated that the state Sheriff’s Office in the state, employing about 820 total personnel. Of those, 525 are “sworn-in” personnel and 100 are patrol officers. The county also has a 1,600-bed jail, with about 1,500 inmates a day.

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