

# LONE TREE VOICE

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DOUGLAS COUNTY, COLORADO

  LoneTreeVoice.net

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VOLUME 22 | ISSUE 10 **SUSTAINABLE PRINTING**

## Plan for Douglas County zoning rule change sees backlash

### Residents fear apartments

BY ELLIS ARNOLD  
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Some voices in a heated group of residents described a proposed change to property development

policy in Douglas County as threatening to the very fabric of the county and its culture.

But county staff portrayed the potential change as minor edits that would clarify confusing language.

Taking place against the backdrop of proposed changes in development policy from Gov. Jared Polis

and Democratic state lawmakers aimed at addressing the state's housing crisis by increasing residential density, the discussion on the local Douglas County language change saw one resident mention the governor during comments that framed the proposal in political terms.

"It's not a secret that leftists

have intentionally targeted county government in a way of pushing an agenda," said Mark Green, who is from the Parker area.

"The founding blocks of socialism is the removal of property rights," Green added.

SEE ZONING, P8



John Murgel, the horticulture and natural resources specialist for CSU Extension, speaking to attendees at the April 15 Arbor Day celebration. PHOTO BY TAYLER SHAW

## Lone Tree highlights value of trees during Arbor Day celebration

### Advice, free trees provided

BY TAYLER SHAW  
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Excitement radiated from Sarah Shiley and her 2-year-old son, Alexander, as he helped carry an unplanted tree taller than him up the steps of the Lone Tree Civic Center.

The young tree was a gift from the City of Lone Tree for participating in the city's celebration of Arbor Day, a time to learn about the importance of trees and encourage planting them.

"Arbor Day is really, it's just ... a celebration of trees. It's a celebration of people coming together, learning why we need trees in our lives and what they provide," said

Sam Waggener, the city's code enforcement coordinator and city forester who helped lead the event.

Coming from Highlands Ranch, Shiley brought Alexander to the celebration after learning about it on Facebook.

"It's nice. I learned some planting tips, too," she said about the event.

SEE ARBOR DAY, P4

## Douglas County bus driver faces 30 counts of child abuse

### Aimed to teach lesson

BY MCKENNA HARFORD  
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A former school bus driver for the Douglas County School District is facing 30 counts of child abuse after purposefully slamming on the brakes, causing injuries to students.

Brian Fitzgerald, 61, was driving students home from Castle Rock Elementary School on March 1 when he brake checked the bus, telling the students they needed to sit properly in their seats, according to video obtained by KRDO. Multiple students hit their heads on the seat in front of them or the bus windows and one student allegedly had a cut on the cheek.

Fitzgerald would later say he was trying to "get them in their seats" and that the students were "bouncing all over the place." In the bus video, students can be heard denying that they were rowdy and asking why Fitzgerald suddenly braked.

In a statement, the Douglas County School District said Fitzgerald's behavior was "completely unacceptable."

SEE BUS DRIVER, P2

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**MAY 4TH-6TH**

# ARBOR DAY

FROM PAGE 1

“And it’s perfect ‘cause our last tree was an ash and it died, and we kinda need to replace the tree.”

They were among several families and neighbors who gathered April 15 in the parking lot of Cook Creek Pool to participate in the celebration.

One of the partners of the event was Douglas County Master Gardeners, which is part of the Colorado State University (CSU) Extension Office in Douglas County.

John Murgel, the horticulture and natural resources specialist for CSU Extension, said that handing out trees to attendees at the end of the event was his favorite part.

“Trees in general make people so happy, so it’s just great to see people happy and going home to plant a tree,” he said.

Waggener said it’s always a joy for people to plant, and he hopes those who attended the celebration found a love for nature.

“I think my favorite part of today was ... seeing people connect the dots and asking questions, getting engaged,” he said. “If one person can learn something, then I think I’ve done my job.”

## Honoring Emma Lou Wilson

This year’s Arbor Day celebration featured a tribute to Emma Lou Wilson, Lone Tree’s first city clerk.

“Elected in 1996, her dedication to civic service and her unwavering commitment to the community she lived in continues to serve as an



Attendees at the City of Lone Tree’s Arbor Day celebration at Cook Creek Pool April 15.

COURTESY OF NATE JONES

inspiration to all of us,” said Mayor Pro Tem Wynne Shaw.

Wilson, who passed away in October 2022, planted the city’s official “Lone Tree” for Arbor Day in 1997, located at the intersection of Lone Tree Parkway and Yosemite Street, according to the city’s website.

“There really is no better time or opportunity to honor her than today,” Shaw said. “Emma Lou

Wilson’s legacy serves as a reminder that each of us has the power to make a positive impact on the world around us.”

“I hope you’ll join me in celebrating her memory and her lifetime of service to the City of Lone Tree, and that you will think of this remarkable civil servant as you are planting the trees that you receive today in your own yard,” she added.

In honor of Wilson, the city recently planted a tree at the civic center that will be later coupled with a plaque, Waggener said.

## Arbor Day’s history and value of trees

Arbor Day was first founded by pioneers moving to Nebraska who longed for trees, Waggener said.

SEE **ARBOR DAY, P5**

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**Sarah Shiley and her 2-year-old son, Alexander, holding their new tree on the steps of the Lone Tree Civic Center April 15.**

PHOTO BY TAYLER SHAW

# ARBOR DAY

FROM PAGE 4

The first proclaimed Arbor Day was in 1874 and by 1920, it was celebrated in 45 states, he said.

According to the Arbor Day Foundation, the day is now celebrated in all 50 states, and the most common date for the state observance is the last Friday in April, which is National Arbor Day.

“Currently, where we are standing today, was previously a grassland. Trees are not naturally occurring here unless in creeks or in stream beds,” Waggener said. “But with a little love, like ... (the) first pioneers gave, trees can thrive here.”

The benefits of trees are endless, he said, such as providing fuel to heat a home, supplying building materials, offering shade and having a positive impact on people’s mental health.

“They are the only infrastructure that increases in value with time,” Waggener said.

The use of trees and vegetation in the urban environment offers benefits such as reduced energy use, lower greenhouse gas emissions, enhanced stormwater management and water quality, and reduced pavement maintenance, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

“The more we can build connections with nature, the better our quality of life is,” said Councilmember Mike Anderson.

### Tree diversity and planting tips

The need for tree diversity can be seen with Dutch elm disease and emerald ash borer, Waggener said.

Dutch elm disease is an aggressive fungal disease spread by the elm bark beetle, according to PlantTalk Colorado. Within a few months to a year, the affected tree dies.

“Emerald ash borer is an insect that affects only ash trees and has not made it to the south metro area, but in due time, it will,” Waggener said, explaining the insect came to Boulder in 2013.

“There are ways to combat this insect, but one is tree diversity,” he said.

Murgel of CSU Extension gave attendees a tour of the different types



**John Murgel, the horticulture and natural resources specialist for CSU Extension, gave a tour of trees at Cook Creek Pool April 15.**

COURTESY OF NATE JONES

of trees surrounding the parking lot of Cook Creek Pool, including bur oak trees, the Colorado blue spruce, honey locusts, hawthorns and ornamental plum trees.

“You can grow trees in Colorado, but planting them correctly and maintaining (them) when they’re young are the secrets to your success and long-lived trees,” Murgel said.

He shared some planting and tree maintenance tips such as:

“Don’t plant a tree too deeply, as it will predispose the tree to some issues. “The primary problem that it predisposes that tree to is that a root is going to girdle the tree. The analogy for a human would be me ... choking myself out,” he said. “You want to be able to see the root flare.” Manage the water sprouts on a tree. “There’s a rule of thirds for trees with water sprouts — is to remove a third, shorten a third and leave a third every year,” he said. When it comes to pruning trees, residents can contact the CSU Extension Office to get advice on the best way to prune.

“If anyone ever has plant questions, they can always call the Extension office. We are a service of the county. We provide free plant advice — give us a jingle,” Murgel said.

To learn more about CSU Extension and the resources it offers, visit: [douglas.extension.colostate.edu](http://douglas.extension.colostate.edu).

# DOUGLAS COUNTY COLORADO

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### Need help with rising heat costs?

Rising heating costs may be hard to budget for this year, but help is available to Douglas County residents who are struggling. If you or someone you know needs assistance, **apply now through April 30, 2023**, for energy assistance through the State of Colorado’s Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP). For more information, visit [douglas.co.us](http://douglas.co.us) and search **LEAP** or email [LEAPHELP@discovermygoodwill.org](mailto:LEAPHELP@discovermygoodwill.org)



### Spring cleaning is at your curbside

Do you have hazardous waste from a painting project, old oil from your car’s maintenance, or other waste from your recent DIY project? This curbside service is available to Douglas County residents for \$30. For details call **1-800-449-7587** or visit [douglas.co.us](http://douglas.co.us) and search **Household Waste Management**.



### Do you own property in Douglas County?

Per Colorado law, Notices of Valuation are mailed to all property owners on **May 1**. Watch your mailbox for a postcard. Questions? Visit [douglas.co.us/assessor](http://douglas.co.us/assessor).



### Need flood zone information?

If you live in unincorporated Douglas County, Flood Insurance Rate Maps and zone information are available by request. Visit [douglas.co.us](http://douglas.co.us) and search for **Flood Plain Information**. A form may also be requested by calling **303-660-7490** or visiting Public Works, 100 Third St. in Castle Rock.



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