

## FOUNTAIN CREEK

### 'Time for action'

#### Local leaders say Springs must show stormwater results

By CHRIS WOODKA

THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

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While Colorado Springs debates how it will handle stormwater issues, critics of the city's stance on flood control say action is needed now.

"There have been any number of studies, and now it's time for action," said Jay Winner, general manager of the Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District. "You can do different studies and get many different results. The outcome may be: 'We have no stormwater problem.' " On Monday, Colorado Springs Mayor Steve Bach announced a request for proposals to evaluate the city's stormwater needs has been issued. The deadline for submitting proposals is April 5, three days after the upcoming municipal election. Bach has pressured Colorado Springs Utilities, which is governed by City Council, to pay for stormwater needs. Six of nine seats on council are up for election this year. A stormwater task force of El Paso County communities found nearly \$900 million in stormwater needs on Fountain Creek, with \$686 million in Colorado Springs alone. Bach requested a second opinion because the amount is 37 percent higher than earlier estimates. Colorado Springs should control the funding, management and construction of its improvements, because it faces the lion's share of payments, Bach said in a news release. Pueblo County has taken the position that the needs identified in 2009 under a 1041 landuse permit must be addressed before the Southern Delivery System begins operations, said County Commissioner Sal Pace.

"From our perspective, they have a huge backlog of projects to address before they pump SDS," Pace said. "As I understand it, they are quibbling about the amount through internal politics. That's not our concern." Pace said projects identified by the nowdefunct stormwater enterprise are referred to in the 1041 permit. Since then, Colorado Springs has a new set of problems associated with last summer's Waldo Canyon Fire. The area is subject to mudslides and erosion until it can be revegetated and stabilized.

"Ironically, Waldo Canyon may be the impetus to get them moving on stormwater," Pace said. [cwoodka@chieftain.com](mailto:cwoodka@chieftain.com)

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