

UPPER RIO GRANDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

May10, 2011

Regular Monthly Meeting
Mountain View Restaurant, Monte Vista, CO

The regular meeting of the Upper Rio Grande Economic Development Council (URGEDC) was called to order at 7:00 a.m. by President Marty Asplin. There were 22 present.

Ms. Suzanne Benton made a motion to accept the minutes of the previous meeting seconded by Bonnie Asplin, the motion carried.

Suzanne Benton presented the treasurer's report with a balance of \$7307.25 and thanked members for paying dues and encouraged those who have not, to get their dues paid. Dusty Hicks made a motion to accept the treasurer's report with a second by Jim Clare, motion passed.

Other unfinished business included a report by Mr. Asplin on the Governor's Bottom-Up Economic Development Plan Initiative. A regional meeting was recently held to combine all six counties plans into the regional plan. The OEIDC website will have the regional plans online in mid May.

President Asplin then introduced Freddy Jaquez executive director of the San Luis Valley Area Health Education Center (AHEC).

Freddy had served for thirty years on the board of AHEC and has been executive director for the past four years.

There are six Health Education Centers in the State of Colorado; Alamosa (SLVAHEC), Grand Junction (western), Greeley (Central), Pueblo (Southeast), Denver and Durango (Southwest.) The regional headquarters is located in Aurora. AHEC's are grassroots organizations as 501 (C) 3's, with local boards for control.

Each AHEC seeks local support for healthcare workforces. They are financed by Federal and State funding plus grants and other donations

Mr. Jaquez is asking for support for the local healthcare workforce, primarily to recruit and retain physicians to the San Luis Valley. Currently students are able to do what is called a Clinical Rural Rotation. The students practice in clinic and hospital settings in the Valley on a three to six week time frame. The students have a Preceptor that works with them and part of what AHEC is doing is finding a place for these people to live during their Rotation.

The time with these students can have a positive experience so that they will stay in the Valley. We need them, and we can help retain them by hosting and supporting their stay. AHEC works with the community to help provide these healthcare providers.

For Arlene Harms at Rio Grande Hospital, if we can retain these physicians in this manner, the saving for the Hospital is around \$40,000.00. This saves using recruiting firms to find physicians for the Hospital. Thus the savings can be used for other vital needs at the hospital.

AHEC also is working a program called "Grow your Own," which works in the schools to encourage local students to consider healthcare careers. The hope is that the students will return to the Valley for their careers in healthcare.

Mr. Jaquez also is proposing another program called "HOME," this is Healthy Outcomes for Marketing Excellence. This marketing involves all of the community including the business sector, non-profit Human Services, faith-based organizations, volunteerism, K-20 education, Professional health schools and local healthcare workforce. As community, everyone is involved in recruiting physicians to the Valley. Mr. Jaquez asked each one to be a welcoming committee for physician recruitment for the Valley.

A part of "HOME" is to help students that come out of medical school with Hugh student loans of \$120,000- 150,000 with repaying those. Mr. Jaquez asked URGEDC members to think of supporting the AHEC efforts to not only recruit physicians, but work on retaining them for the long term.

Other accomplishments for AHEC have been TuCasa and Hospice.

President Asplin thanked Freddy for the presentation.

Marty then presented Ms. Crestina Martinez for her program on CarePoint.

CarePoint is not a health insurance, but a San Luis Valley multi-share program that allows access to healthcare. It is established for businesses throughout the Valley and offered to employees by sharing the cost.

Crestina presented how one qualifies, and that it is limited to the Valley. The cost is shared 1/3rd by each the employee, employer and the community. A monthly premium is \$150.00, so each party covers 1/3rd of the cost. Maximum benefit is \$30,000. CarePoint covers preventive care without copay, and other services have low copay.

For more information, Crestina can be contacted at 580-2666.

Marty thanked Crestina for the presentation.

Don VanWormer reported that Monte Vista is busy with activities including the concrete work on the parking lot at the future Valley-Wide clinic, a branding exercise for the town, consideration of a Downtown development Authority. Businesses are preparing for the CDOT construction that will disrupt the downtown next summer. The town is working on a P.R. campaign on how to survive this construction. Mr. VanWormer introduced Kari McCool. Ms. McCool is a recently arrived resident of Monte Vista and has a land use consulting firm.

Marty reported that the town of Del Norte has a model of the proposed changes for the New Town Hall. This will be a total new look. The town is working on installing solar on buildings and the town pump houses.

Marty introduced Mr. Bill Mathews, the new town manager for South Fork. Mr. Mathews reported that South Fork is interviewing for a new Chief of Police and has had a presentation on the Wharton Bridge project. The Chamber is gearing up for the summer influx as well and the town is working on a sign code.

Rio Grande County Commissioner Dennis Murphy reported that the county is progressing on the Korean Leaflet Project. This will be held on June 24th. The county is waiting on a reply from Governor Hickenlooper requesting his attendance at the event. Louise Colville is the new museum coordinator and the museum is open for business. The "Doug Davie Open Shed" building to be built next to the McMullen building at Ski-Hi park is progressing with construction expected this summer.

Dusty Hicks reported that the Village at Wolf Creek will have a website shortly, hopefully today, and the Forest Service is proceeding with the public scoping process. Folks have until June 4 to give Forest Service comments. It is not if now, but when and what the Village will look like. The Village is working with schools and Adams State with the types of jobs that will be involved and created with construction at the Village. Marty expects a draft EIS by this fall, and next year a land exchange to proceed. If any one has questions, please contact Dusty.

. Mike Hurst made a motion to adjourn with a second by Bonnie Asplin, motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert Hagedorn
Secretary