

**11 Aug 09**  
**Upper Rio Grande Economic Development Council**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**Movie Manor, Monte Vista, CO**

The meeting was called to order by President T.J. Brown.

There were no changes to the agenda.

The minutes were approved on a motion from Bonnie Asplin.

In the Treasurer's Report TJ explained a bill that was coming for \$500 to help advertise the Rhythms on the Rio event. This can be tracked for effectiveness and will help with the gathering of information on ways to improve visitation to the valley, which is one of our goals.

Terry Smith spoke about the railroad's need for participation by CDOT in their current grant project. There will be a meeting at the Depot Building in Alamosa at 8:00am on Tuesday the 18<sup>th</sup> with the regional representative from CDOT.

Donna Wehe introduced Deanne Elliott who is the new councilor for Rio Grande County with the SBDC.

Hew Hallock with the Governor's Energy Office then took the floor. He explained that the Weatherization Program in the Stimulus Package is available to anyone who is within 200% of the poverty level. This program can replace appliances, heaters, insulation, and roofs. The limit is \$6500 per home. A lot of the work is being done by the Veterans Green Jobs group who are currently working at Home Lake in Monte Vista. For homes that don't qualify for the Weatherization Program there are rebates available many of the same improvements. The GEO hopes to do three things;

- Increase access to capital
- Provide information about conservation
- Provide access to services for the improvements

They are encouraging Energy Performance Contracts on Public Buildings. These are to enable Energy Services Cos. to do audits on energy use/cost. This will allow for demonstration of how savings can help fund the improvements. They are also starting a Main Street Program for Commercial Buildings to help with similar audits. Currently under consideration is some sort of incentive or rebate program to help offset the cost.

There are currently Energy Star mortgages available for qualifying homes. Qualifying homes have increased from 8% to 20% over the last three years.

Hew complimented SLVREC on all their partnering efforts on solar rebates and energy efficiency. SLVREC's rebate program is completely sold out for this year. The rebates were approximately 40% of the cost of the Solar system. They were in the \$3000 – \$6000 range.

They also have a Greening Government program to encourage government to lead the way in construction and improvements.

Hew's office is in the Depot in Alamosa. He reminded everyone of the High Performance Building workshop at ASC on Thursday from 1:00pm – 5:30pm. It is being used

on school projects in Alamosa and Sargent. Any building being done with 25% or more State funding may register on line for the High Performance Program.

#### Town Reports;

- Monte Vista. Don Van Wormer introduced John Lyons from, Sterling, who will start on Monday as the new Main Street manager and as the Economic Development Director. Don spoke about the closing of the Monte Villa and pointed out that energy costs were always an issue there. The Ski Hi phase II demolition has begun. He also is looking for a new Youth Services Director, which is a full time position. Stampede did well, while carnival attendance may have been down a little. He asked that the URGEDC members keep alert to the Monte Villa as a hotel or a redevelopment site. Possibly an energy audit is in order.
- Del Norte. The water meter project will have bid openings on Thursday the 20<sup>th</sup> and will then go into full swing. Nancy Schrader thought the Rio Grande Hospital had made about \$27,000 at their dinner and fund raiser. The RGH is also getting 2 new Doctors. The Covered Wagon Days parade and events were well attended and, with the exception of running out of beer briefly, went off without a hitch.
- South Fork. The Greater South Fork Community Foundation held their 1<sup>st</sup> annual Free Ice Cream Social at the Community Building and as one might expect free ice cream attracted good crowds. They held a Dancing under the Stars fund raiser at the Hungry Logger. There seem to be more tourists this year than ever and all the RV areas are full.
- Rio Grande County. Their budget is tight and they expect it to be even tighter next year. The pilots fly-in at the Rominger Airport went well, having quite a few visiting pilots. They even ran out of burritos. The “skin patching” the County has done is receiving rave reviews for its quality. The planning dept is continuing to work on the Master Plan for Commercial Development.

On September 12<sup>th</sup> the Colorado Potato Administration Council will hold the annual Potato Festival in Monte Vista. It was great fun and food last year and plans to be even better this year.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of October there will be a SLV Tourism Council Conference all day at the Inn of the Rio Grande in Alamosa. The theme is Agra - Tourism.

On a motion from Jim Clare the meeting was adjourned.