

12 July 11
Upper Rio Grande Economic Development Council
Regular Meeting, 7:00 AM
Biggins Restaurant, South Fork, CO

The meeting was called to order by President, Marty Asplin.

Minutes to the regular meeting were approved on a motion by Dusty Hicks and a second by Nancy Schrader.

The Treasurer's Report of \$6,247.25 positive balance was approved on a motion by TJ Brown and a second by Jim Clare.

Old Business:

Hospitality Scholarship Offer:

Suzanne Benton reported that the plan in conjunction with the Rio Grande Tourism Board has been slightly re-structured. The first Hospitality Training session is to take place on August 10th, 2011 in South Fork, with the participation of all towns.

New Business:

Marty explained that Robert Hagedorn has resigned his position on the Board of Directors due to accepting employment in Pueblo, leaving one opening on the Board and the office of Secretary. Marty asked for volunteers and there was no response.

Program:

Marty introduced Ms. Glynn Polter, President of the South Fork Chamber of Commerce and added "the South Fork Chamber has been meeting with professionals and economic development organizations from across the valley for several months. Their intent is to develop plans to help attract new businesses, assist existing businesses, and create an overall business friendly environment in South Fork. They recently held a seminar "Doing Business in South Fork."

Ms. Polter handed out flyers from the seminar and explained the main focus was showing the opportunities available in South Fork for existing and new businesses.

Opportunities for existing businesses include 1) an upcoming "Night on the Town" where retailers and restaurateurs will run specials to entice customers, 2) a free customer service training session to be held August 10th, 3) the study to expand new ways to advertise for South Fork and its businesses, and 4) the possibility of using Bingo proceeds for advertising purposes.

South Fork needs additional businesses and services and has the vacant commercial properties to house them. A committee has done preliminary research, listing all vacant commercial properties and listing the types of businesses needed in South Fork (via a poll of residents). The goal is to make a match of the two.

The seminar was successful; they had an excellent Realtor turn-out and several people attended who are interested in starting a business in South Fork. Speakers included Donna Wehe, Director of the SLV Small Business Development Center; Bill Matthews, South Fork Town Manager; Connie Goodnight (spoke about the vacant commercial properties); and Kim Krahn, owner of the Malt Shoppe.

Other topics covered were possible incentives that might be available through the town government and business owners; and a discussion of the information that can be gleaned from

www.sitesacrossamerica.com (a website with real estate information, community demographics and links, contacts for site development, and available site and building information).

Town Reports:

Monte Vista has started their ten-week program with the railroad, bringing in a tourist train from Alamosa from 11 AM to 1 PM, with music/band on Thursday nights. The town is finalizing its "Downtown-Up Market Analysis" and has learned that they are not capturing their market potential with 1.2 million visitors passing through each year. The analysis has provided a list of opportunities in spin-off agricultural manufacturing and products. The analysis has resulted in the discussion of the advantages of forming a Downtown Development Association (DDA). Monte Vista is currently working on planning for the next two years, which includes many changes for the community.

Del Norte is making progress on the architectural plans for the business park and incubator at the old potato co-op buildings and is about two months away from completing the final concept drawings. Upcoming events in the town include Christmas in July, Covered Wagon Days, August 4 – 7, and Keep the Dream Alive dinner and auction, August 13 to benefit the Rio Grande Hospital.

South Fork's new town manager, Bill Matthews, said South Fork is working on its business district plan to better identify businesses and business corridors and on sign codes and land use codes. They have agreed there is a need to coordinate efforts among the government, organizations and the community in order to better encourage and accommodate new business prospects in a timely manner. The town was awarded a GOCO Grant to develop a Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Among upcoming events are the Home Tour, July 14; Logger Days, July 15 – 17; Ice Cream Social, July 21; and Dancing Under the Stars, August 6.

The FFA Convention in Alamosa in June was highly successful and impacted the entire valley with over 1,500 students attending and the prospect of the convention returning in 2013.

Rio Grande County has successfully completed the Korean Leaflet Ceremony and Reception. They are currently applying for a GOCO grant for the new structure at Ski Hi Park. They have received three more applications for hangars/electricals at Rominger Airport. The Board of County Commissioners held a hearing on implementing the "FireWise Program," which matches up homeowners with associations to help them mitigate fire hazards when properties interface with national forests. The program also offers education on how to properly burn ditches and targets certain developments which are prone to fire hazards. RGC is working in conjunction with Conejos County on a road improvement project and working on a plan to improve and expand the Homelake Veterans Center cemetery.

There being no other business, Dusty Hicks moved to adjourn the meeting and TJ Brown seconded the motion.

Substituting for Robert Hagedorn,
Bonnie Asplin