

**13 Jan 2009 Del Norte, Colorado**  
**Upper Rio Grande Economic Development Council**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**Boogies Restaurant**

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

On motion by Jim Clare, and a second by Bonnie Asplin, the previous regular meeting minutes were approved.

On motion by Jim Clare, and a second by Dusty Little, the Treasurer's Report was approved. Suzanne Benton reminded everyone that 2009 dues are due this month.

Suzanne gave a report on the Rominger airport. RGC commissioner Robert Hagedorn had attended a meeting with US Congressman John Salazar, who is now head of the Appropriations Committee, and presented the needs of the airport. He learned that the airport project (as confirmed in the Jan 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Valley Courier*) is ranked first priority in CDOT's federal aviation projects in the state and noted as requiring \$3 million. Suzanne said RG County may possibly be ready to start staking things out by mid February. There was a discussion for the need of a letter of support to both Salazars. Suzanne said they are still anticipating there will be a January meeting with all of the stakeholders.

Suzanne reported on the Jan 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the people working on the Littlewing Amphitheater project. She is drafting a letter to Ken Salazar, nominee for Secretary of the Interior, to ask if the federal government would consider donating the approximate 640 acres to RG County. Her reason for considering the donation was that several years back the fed had offered the property for sale.

Next on the agenda was discussion of the oil and gas leases that are currently being reviewed in the Valley. Suzanne reminded everyone of the Oil & Gas Workshop to be held Thursday, Jan 22 at 6:30 to 9:30 PM at the RG County Annex. She said there is a schedule of speakers from several federal, state and local agencies.

An open and active discussion about oil and gas leases followed. The conclusion was a consensus that the URGEDC should draft a letter of support expressing our concerns that all drilling be handled in an environmentally safe way and that laws and regulations be enforced.

Jim Clare spoke about SLVREC progress in identifying best locations for alternative energy projects in the Valley and their continued work on the transmission lines to the east with Tri State and Xcel.

Suzanne Benton and Marty Asplin did a verbal presentation (due to Amigo.net being off line) of the progress and wrapping up of the changes to the URGEDC website, [www.URGEDC.com](http://www.URGEDC.com). All active members are listed with direct links to any who has WebPages. There will be postings of regular meeting minutes, agendas and calendar, in addition to application for membership. Each of the categories on the left side of the

page provides a drop down screen of organizations pertaining to each category that allows direct links to web pages or phone numbers for agencies and organizations. The new updated and revised Community Profile will be available on the web page. They stressed it is a user-friendly, active web site with a series of short cuts. They asked for photos to be sent to Master Print Web and Design and reminded us that URGEDC members receive a discount to design their own web pages.

Next order of business was the election of Bonnie Asplin to fill the board of directors vacancy (left by former board member Dan Hicks), on a nomination by Doug Davie and second by Karen Little.

#### Town Reports:

Jim Clare said that Monte Vista is hiring an Economic Development person, probably as part time employment. Through the support of Rio Grande County, Monte has reopened a club for their school kids to cover the loss of the Boys and Girls Club. The Southern Rocky Mountain Agricultural Conference will be held at Ski Hi Park from Feb. 10 – 15. Also Jim suggested that we get the SLVDRG Challenge information from Mike Wisdom and e-mail it to the URGEDC members.

Nancy Schrader and Karen Little handed out Del Norte Chamber of Commerce nomination forms for Organization and Person of the Year. The pie social fundraiser will be held March 9<sup>th</sup> at Huckleberries. Nancy announced the opening of the new doctors' clinic at the RG Hospital, which honored the Haug family, and May 2<sup>nd</sup> fundraiser, "Fiesta de Mayo," a dinner and dance at Ski Hi Park (all food donated by Ronnie Martinez, Mtn. View Restaurant). This year's auction and dinner fundraiser will be held on July 18<sup>th</sup> at the Del Norte schools' bus barn. Karen reported that the High Valley Community Center received \$13,000 from Social Services for after school programs and a \$14,000 grant to fix the interior of the building, which they are close to purchasing.

Dusty Little reported on the activity in Creede. The chamber of commerce is in a new location; lots of construction, with the new residential subdivision in Creede and renovations all over town. The town is starting the process of surveying, and possibly re-platting the entire town.

Marty attended the Town of South Fork's work session with a presentation on River Parks from a Salida/Boulder company. This was part of the Wharton Town Center plan. He said the presentation was all encompassing and showed examples of other River projects in the west. There will be a funding raising event for the Wharton Town Bridge project in February or March.

There being no further business, Marty adjourned the meeting.