

**Upper Rio Grande Economic Development Council**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**14 June 2011**  
**Boogies Restaurant, Del Norte, CO**

President, Marty Asplin, called the meeting to order and requested any changes to the Agenda. None being offered, the minutes to the last regular meeting of May 10, 2011 were approved unanimously upon a motion by Shon Davis and a second by Cheryl Jones.

Suzanne Benton gave the Treasurer's Report with a positive balance of \$7,247.25; it was approved by vote after a motion by Bonnie Asplin and a second by Shon Davis.

**New Business:**

Marty opened by saying we had received a letter from the South Fork Music Association with news of their preparations for the up-coming "Rhythms on the Rio Music Festival" and with a request for financial support from the URGEDC again this year. The festival will be held on August 13 and 14 at the River Mill Development site across from Ute Bluff in South Fork. Marty noted that the URGEDC has donated in past years, giving \$500 last year. T.J. Brown made a motion to donate the same amount (\$500) to show our continued support of the festival, which is a valid economic driver, bringing in tourist and local dollars. Shon Davis seconded the motion. With no further discussion the motion was passed.

Cheryl Jones presented information about the SLVREC Energy Fair to be held next week, June 21<sup>st</sup> from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Ski Hi Park. She noted there will be speakers on various issues, extensive information on energy efficiency credits and green jobs, and great food.

Rodney Reed opened discussion regarding Customer Service Excellence and the need for hospitality and customer service training in the Valley. Donna Wehe talked about past successes and failures of programs offered by SBDC and concluded that business owners might be more apt to participate if they were compensated for employees' time spent at training (instead of at work). This led to discussion about offering scholarships as incentives to employers to send their front line employees to training sessions. Funding could be solicited from the Rio Grande County Lodging Board. T.J. Brown made a motion that the URGEDC give a 25% match, up to \$500, to whatever the Lodging Board agrees to allocate to a customer service training program. It was seconded by Rodney Reed and passed unanimously.

**Town Reports:**

Monte Vista has started construction on the Bill Metz grade school, and Valley Wide is progressing nicely on Jefferson Street. The SBDC is offering on-line training workshops on Tuesdays at 5:30 at the Information Center.

Del Norte has signed the contract for installing solar arrays around town at town owned facilities; construction will begin soon; each unit will have a Kbar to stabilize power and save 15% of normal usage; the town operations will become carbon neutral with the solar system. The architects for the Del Norte Regional Business Park and Incubator have had their first public meeting to initiate the design for the old Del Norte Potato Co-Op buildings. The town is working on negotiations with a business interested in coming to Del Norte, which would bring 70 to 100 full time jobs. Robert Hagedorn has begun a new job in Pueblo on an interim basis and may have to resign as URGEDC secretary.

In South Fork, Don Shanks has begun summer operations of his railroad to include a “float and tote” service for rafters and full moon excursions up to Wagon Wheel Gap in July and August. There will be a Business Expo at the Information Center, sponsored by the South Fork Chamber and local Realtors on July 11<sup>th</sup> from 8 to 12. The purpose of this networking business seminar is to attract new business to move to South Fork.

In Alamosa constructions projects include the new town hall complex as well as several new businesses in downtown. The goal for the many summer events is to bring people into town who will shop at retail stores, buy food and eat at restaurants, and stay in hotels and motels.

Rio Grande County has the Korean Leaflet Ceremony and Reception on June 24<sup>th</sup> and is planning for a good turnout.

With no other business, TJ Brown moved to adjourn the meeting and Shon Davis seconded the motion.

Substituting for Robert Hagedorn,  
Bonnie Asplin